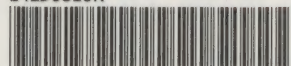


Medicine Under Canvas



A WAR JOURNAL OF THE 77TH EVACUATION HOSPITAL

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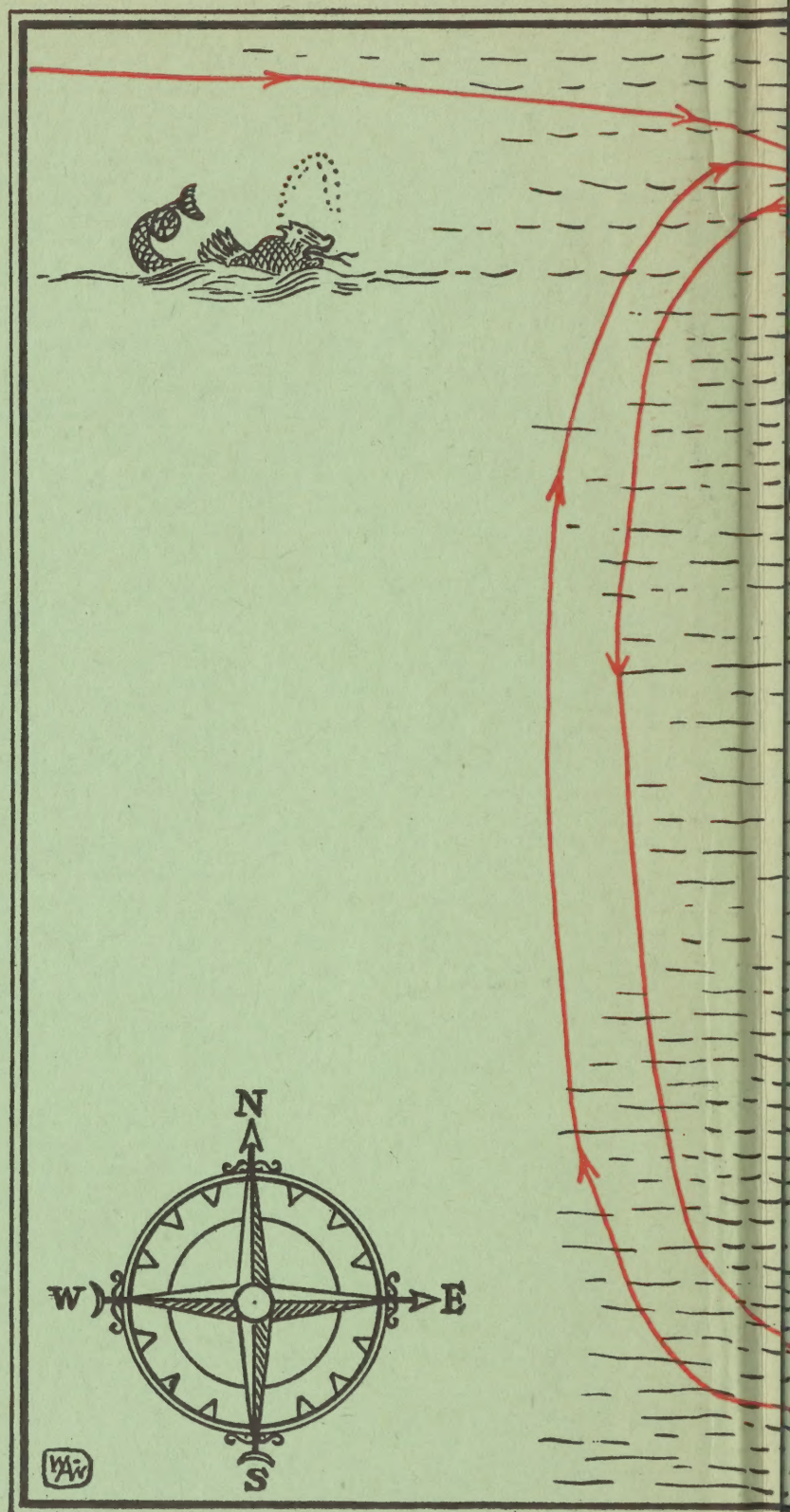
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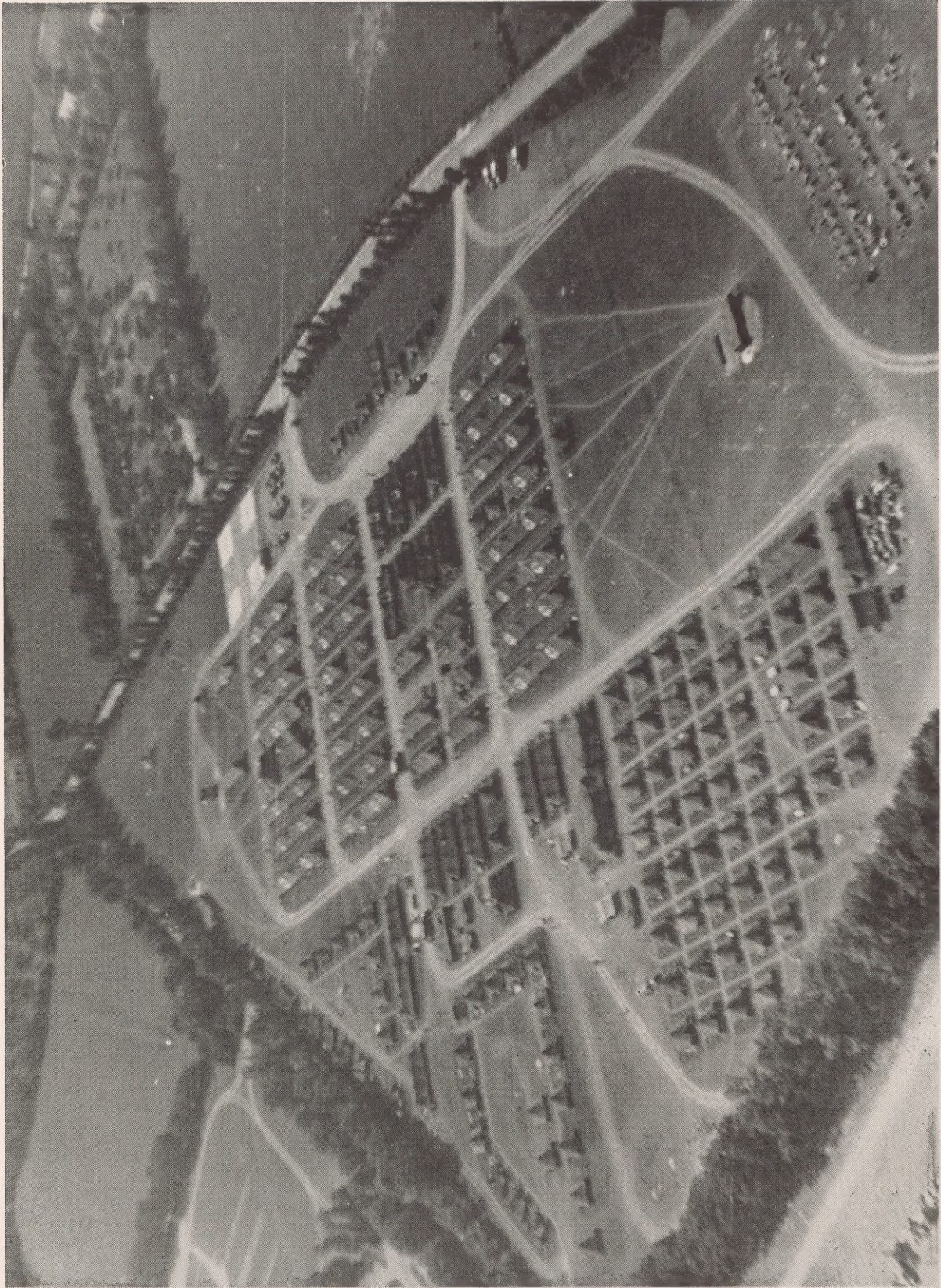
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Medicine Under Canvas



ISAIAH 54:2.—ENLARGE THE SITE OF YOUR TENT, AND STRETCH WITHOUT LIMIT THE CURTAINS OF YOUR HOME, LENGTHEN YOUR CORDS, AND MAKE FAST YOUR PEGS.

U. S. Army. Evacuation Hospital No 77

Medicine Under Canvas

A WAR JOURNAL OF THE 77TH EVACUATION HOSPITAL



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Dedication

To Our Patients

Preface

THE idea for a unit history of some sort was probably present at one time or another in the mind of every soldier overseas. Personal diaries were prohibited in all armed forces overseas, and the censoring of mail made it impossible to write letters home concerning military activities, dates, names, and places. Any authentic record then of the activities of a unit must come by means of a unit history with an adjutant's diary or ship's log as its official source of data.

In February of 1945 when the 77th Evacuation Hospital was stationed in LaLouviere, Belgium, Col. Dean Walker, commanding officer, suggested that some sort of a record of the hospital's activities should be written, and requested a few officers and men to canvass the entire unit and determine each member's reaction to such a proposal. The response was predominantly in favor of such a proposal so long as the party under interview was to have no part in the work of creating the history. The problem of establishing an editorial staff for the project came to a rapid solution one evening in the officers' and nurses' mess when the president of the officers' club arose, discussed the proposition of a history and asked for nominations for the positions of editor (an officer), associate editor (a nurse), and business manager (an officer). In rapid fire order the three offices were filled. The fact that none of the three was present at the meeting to defend his rights in open debate or even knew of the action to be taken, seems significant.

The enlisted men in open meeting selected three men from their own group to act on the editorial staff, and it soon was apparent that the writing ability of two of these three far surpassed the talent of the elected officers. The third enlisted man had been selected because of his knowledge of photography.

At the first meeting of the entire editorial staff, it was agreed that George Haire and John Clason should do the bulk of the writing, Walter Mason would handle all matters pertaining to photography, Captain Postlethwait would take charge of the financial matters, and Lieutenant Cross and Major Allen would aid and assist where their abilities permitted. Within a relatively short time, Haire was granted a compassionate leave to the United States because of illness in his immediate family, and Clason and Mason were each given commissions of Second Lieutenant and transferred out of the unit. Two others were drafted to help out and were promptly given commissions and transferred out. Finally, at Munchen-Gladbach, Germany, a staff of loyal and willing workers was recruited, and in a concerted effort of several weeks following the defeat of Germany the factual material for the book was recorded in crude style, the photographic material was obtained and

the working basis for the book established. The actual task of final writing and assembling of photographs fell on the shoulders of Cross, Postlethwait, and Allen. Contributors to the book are so numerous that one should say it was written by the entire unit. In order to get a varied viewpoint of events or phases of activity, assignments were made to various individuals who wrote in their own words their experiences or reactions at a certain time. In several instances, more detailed and elaborate accounts of phases of the unit's activities were described in these contributions. The landings during the invasion of Sicily were described by Captain Norman Gale, while the growth and development of the electrical service was aptly described by Sgt. Gordon Gratias. All such contributors are too numerous to mention, and we apologize for not giving credit for these accounts. Without them, the book would not have been possible.

Thanks are due to Colonel Walker for making a tent available for the work at Munchen-Gladbach and for relieving the staff of other duties during this period; to Gordon Voorhees for proofreading the manuscript; to Mary Jane Elliott and Mary Bortz for their work in arranging the photographic material and writing captions; and to the publishers, especially Mr. Wayne Sigourney, for his unselfish efforts and timely suggestions. Without the help of Mr. Sigourney, a book greatly inferior to this one would have gone to press.

Ten volumes this size could not possibly include all the incidents which were so much a part of the colorful career of the 77th, or all the people who contributed to its history. Perhaps the following lines best express our thoughts:

APOLOGY

We couldn't put in all the great
Or even all the small,
And many names with sterling claims
We haven't used at all.

But here's a rather varied lot,
As anyone can see,
And all and each by deed and speech
Adorned our history.

Some got the medals and the plums,
Some got their fingers burnt,
But everyone's a native son,
Except for those who weren't.

From: A BOOK OF AMERICANS, Published
by Farrar and Rinehart

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Vincent Benet.

THE EDITORIAL STAFF.

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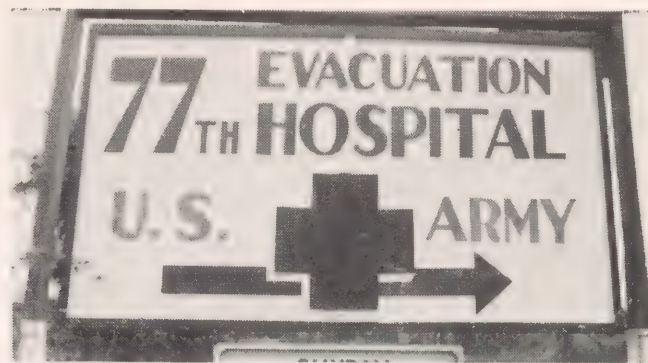
Medicine Under Canvas



Introduction

THE mission of the Medical Department of the United States Army is to keep the soldier well and able to fight, or if he is wounded or sick to evacuate him and restore him to well-being as soon as possible. In order to accomplish this efficiently the Medical Department is organized into a series of installations, connected by links of transportation, from the frontline litter-bearers to the highly specialized and expensively equipped hospital trains, planes and ships. Each succeeding installation is capable of giving more definite care and treatment until the rear echelon of general hospitals is reached. Both in the theater of operations and in the zone of the interior, these general hospitals provide the utmost in medical care and rehabilitation for return of the patient to active service or civilian life. The evacuation hospital is the most forward unit capable of all types of definitive medical and surgical care. Generally situated several miles behind the division rear boundary, it is usually out of range of enemy artillery.

The 77th Evacuation Hospital had a normal capacity of 750 beds and constituted the neck of the funnel through which all casualties passed in their transit out of the serviced sector of the combat zone to the hospitals of the communications zone. The table of organization for an evacuation hospital authorized the enlisted strength of 318 men, 52 nurses, 1 hospital dietitian, and 47 officers. The purposes of an evacuation hospital as set forth in the *Military Medical Manual*, are: one, to provide facilities for major medical and surgical procedures in treatment of casualties as near the front as practicable; two, to provide definitive treatment as early as practicable; three, to relieve combat troops of the burden of casualties; four, to provide facilities for concentration of evacuees so that mass evacuation by rail, motor, airplane, or water transport can be undertaken economically; five, to prepare serious cases for further evacuation; six, to remove from the chain of evacuation those casualties which are fit for duty or soon will be. In order to accomplish these purposes, this hospital was organized into a number of departments whose functions were closely interrelated and coordinated. A patient ad-



mitted to the hospital had no way of knowing the professional and administrative functions which were necessary in order that he might have excellent professional care, comfortable housing, and proper food. The multitudinous services both large and small which, to the patient appeared so automatic and commonplace, actually necessitated some measure of work from every department. So you may look behind the scenes and understand better the actual mechanism of this hospital, let us follow a patient from the time of admission to the 77th Evacuation Hospital until he leaves, correlating each phase of his stay with the labor and supply involved.

The patient, with other casualties, approaches the hospital by ambulance. Along the road the driver is guided by signs which have been strategically placed by the utilities branch of the supply department of the hospital to direct all incoming traffic to the proper entrance. At the entrance a guard waves the ambulance to the receiving tent. As the ambulance stops, the rear doors are opened by litter-bearers who carry the litter patients into the receiving tent and direct the walking wounded to benches. The empty ambulance, guided by signs along the one-way hos-



ENTRANCE ROAD TO HOSPITAL

pital streets, stops at the property exchange tent, a branch of the evacuation department, where the driver obtains litters and blankets to replace those left at the receiving tent. If the driver is hungry, he may eat at the transit mess which operates twenty-four hours daily.

The receiving department is staffed by two medical officers and six clerks. The medical officer examines each patient briefly to determine whether he is a medical or surgical case. Depending on the nature of the illness or injury, the patients are further subdivided into the categories of the various medical and surgical specialties, such as orthopedics, communicable disease, neuro-surgery, or

abdominal surgery. His valuables and firearms are registered and removed to the property storage tent for safekeeping. The first part of the medical field record is



DOUBLE WARD TENT WITH COTS FOR 40 PATIENTS

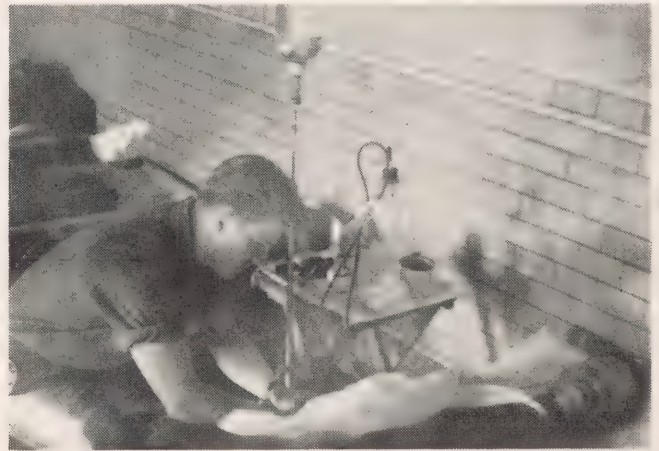
made out, and an extract of the record including name, serial number, organization, and admission diagnosis is sent to the registrar's office. Should the patient require



WASTE CAN AT SERVICE ENTRANCE

immediate surgical treatment, a surgical consultant is called and the patient may go directly to the operating room. In the case of prisoner-of-war patients, delousing is carried out by spraying them with DDT powder.

After the receiving department has completed the admission of the patient, which normally requires less than five minutes, the patient is taken by the litter bearers to the assigned ward tent. He is met by the nurse or ward attendant who assigns him to bed and, after determining the urgency of his illness, notifies the ward officer. In the meantime, the patient's clothing is removed, he is given pajamas and is made as comfortable as possible in his bed. A record of his temperature, pulse, and respirations is made available for the ward officer, along with the other data recorded in the ward book. The patient finds himself in a long ward, consisting of two ward tents joined end to end, containing cots for forty patients. Entrance is gained through the canvas flap doors at each end, and on one side at the center of the tent is an opening for a "service entrance." Electric lights hang from wires running lengthwise through the ward. During the cold months, heat is furnished by small pot-bellied stoves, the stovepipe running through the tent roof. In the center section of the



PLASMA IS ADMINISTERED TO AN UNCONSCIOUS PATIENT

ward, a shaded light hangs over the nurse's desk where the records are kept. Other equipment in the center section includes a medicine cabinet, a linen closet, a "kitchen" section, and utilities box containing such utensils as bed pans, urinals, wash pans, etc. In the next bed a patient is receiving blood, the bottle suspended from an improvised standard stuck in the dirt floor. Across the aisle, a medical technician is starting an intravenous infusion of plasma on an unconscious patient who has just returned from the operating room; the ward officer is changing the dressings on a third patient; while the nurse administers a pain relieving hypodermic injection to another; in the back ward one of the attendants is giving an enema and the other is checking the diet list. The patient now realizes that although the tile floors and white starched uniforms seen in a hospital at home are lacking, all the basic essentials for modern and efficient medical care are present here.

The ward officer, having finished the dressing, now approaches our patient and quickly but thoroughly ascertains the nature and extent of the wound. Our patient knows that his left forearm has been injured, and he is relieved by the doctor's assurance that no radical operation will be necessary and the arm will be as good as new in a few weeks. The doctor explains that x-rays will be

MEDICINE UNDER CANVAS

taken and later he will go to the operating room. As the doctor moves away, our patient realizes that this man, although wearing an officer's uniform, is primarily a doctor.

An insulated food container is now brought into the ward. Inside are smaller containers filled with various kinds of food so that four types of diets may be made up and served on compartmented metal trays. On asking why he was not served with the others, our patient is told that he could not be fed until his return from the operating room.

The tent just described is typical of the twenty-three wards comprising the ward area of the hospital. The responsibility of obtaining and maintaining the tent, cots, blankets, heat, light, and drugs rests primarily with the supply department. All of this equipment, however, is the responsibility of the ward personnel and the supply section of the service concerned. For example, when the hospital moves, packing the equipment and striking and rolling the tent are done by the ward personnel. On arrival at the new site, the same group erects the tents, sets up the cots, makes the beds, and prepares the ward for occupancy



LARGE WATER TANK TRUCK FILLS LISTER BAGS
THROUGHOUT THE AREA

as rapidly as possible. A water supply is maintained by the sanitation department by means of a water tank-truck which drives through the hospital area several times daily filling the Lister bags in front of the ward tents. The san-

itation department is also responsible for the maintenance of latrines and the removal and disposition of garbage and trash.

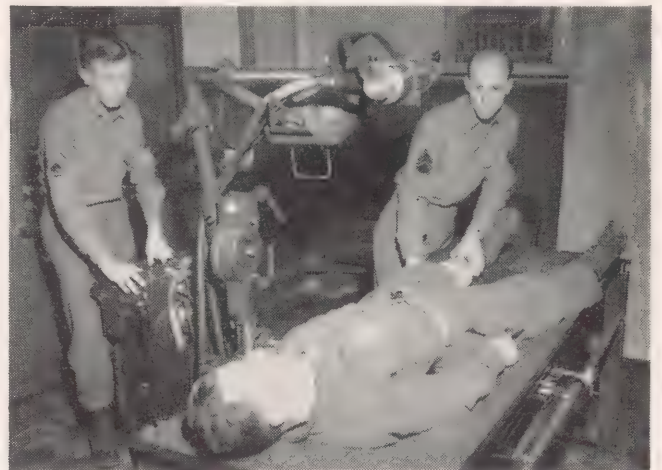
Electric power is furnished by two portable diesel generators of thirty kilowatt capacity. All wiring, light bulbs, and the maintenance of other electrical equipment is the responsibility of the electricians under the utilities branch of the supply department. A faulty stove, a leaky tent, a



DIESEL GENERATOR SUPPLIES ELECTRICAL POWER

broken cot, or other equipment in need of repair or replacement becomes a problem of the supply department. The signs indicating the various departments or wards are painted and maintained by the utilities department. Fire extinguishers, fire points, and the fire prevention program are under the control of the fire marshal and his staff.

As our patient settles between clean, white sheets for the first time in months, his bliss is suddenly interrupted as the litter-bearers arrive to carry him to the x-ray department. Here he finds a highly organized group of specialists who are working at peak load. In spite of the apparent rush, he is on the fluoroscopy table within a few minutes; a metallic shell fragment in his arm is localized by a med-



PORTABLE X-RAY UNIT

ical officer who places a purple dot on the skin over it; two x-ray pictures of the arm are made; and our patient is ready to go to the operating tent. The x-ray department



is under the supervision of two medical officers, specialists in this branch of medicine. The enlisted men are also well trained technicians who take and develop the x-ray films and assist in fluoroscopy. Two dark-rooms, one for fluoroscopy and one for the development and handling of film, are inside the main x-ray tent. The equipment, which is of the latest type, is easily portable and yet compares favorably with the diagnostic equipment of any other hospital.

After another short litter ride of about fifty yards, our patient finds himself in the operating tent. After a few minutes wait in the anteroom he is taken into the operating theater and the litter is placed on one of the operating tables. As the nurse-anesthetist prepares the anesthetic, the doctor reviews the patient's record of injury and the resulting symptoms. The wound is inspected and any necessary detailed examination carried out. By this time the x-ray report and plates are ready and these are read by the surgeon. As the surgeon leaves to scrub, the nurse-anesthetist deftly inserts a needle into a vein of the uninjured arm, and just as he is becoming interested in a conversation about home, she begins to inject the solution of sodium pentothal which quietly produces sleep within sixty seconds. The surgical technician completes removal of the bandage and gently scrubs the skin with alcohol and ether. A tray of freshly sterilized instruments is ready for the surgeon as he returns to the table. Within a few minutes the wound is debrided, the metal fragment removed, and a plaster cast is being applied. As the cast dries, the records are completed and pertinent data entered in the operating room record book. The cast, having dried, is split and a pencil drawing of the wound and the broken



WOUNDED PATIENT IN CAST PREPARED
FOR EVACUATION

bones is made on the cast over the approximate site. The patient is now returned to his ward where he recovers from the anesthetic.

As our patient sleeps, let us return to the operating room and examine more closely the functioning of this important department. Six large tents, connected in the form of an irregular letter "H," form the housing for the operating room, central and sterile supply, and the shock department. The main entrance in the connecting tent affords easy access to any of the wings without traversing any other wing. The connecting tent serves as an anteroom or wait-

ing room and also contains the records desk. On the right is the surgeons' scrub room and a small work room where the instruments are cleaned and sterilized after each operation. The right rear wing, the operating room proper, contains four operating units consisting of table, lights, stands,



MODEL OPERATING ROOM UNIT

and other necessary equipment. The walls and ceiling are lined with white sheets and the floor is covered with gravel. Along the left wall are sets of shelves on which are neatly arranged the sterile supplies, instruments, and linens. On the right side are the anesthesia tables and machines with their tanks of oxygen and anesthetic gases. In the rear of this section is the plaster room containing two special tables for the treatment of fractures. In the right front wing is another smaller operating room containing two tables usually given over to neuro-surgery or other highly specialized types of operative procedures. In the left front wing is the central supply department, with its battery of autoclaves, large work tables, and huge boxes of linens, dressings, gowns, and other supplies. Here the ward surgeon may obtain a sterile package containing all the needed instruments and material to perform a spinal puncture, to remove fluid from the chest, or carry out a similar minor procedure. In fact, the sterile supplies for the entire hospital are assembled, processed, packaged and distributed by this department. The left rear wing contains the penicillin team and the shock department. The shock team prepares the blood plasma, whole blood, and other intravenous solutions, after which it is taken to the ward or operating wing ready for administration to the patient. Requests for the services of the shock department or for penicillin therapy are delivered to this wing. Cases of dried blood plasma and saline and glucose solution are kept here. In one corner is a gasoline-operated still, which supplies distilled water for the entire hospital. A large kerosene-burning refrigerator serves as storage for the penicillin and blood.

The operating room is manned by two complete groups working twelve hours each. The basic unit is an operating team consisting of an operating surgeon, nurse-anesthetist, and surgical technician. The subsidiary sections of shock, central supply, are also operated twenty-four hours daily by two crews. At the end of each twelve hour shift, the feverish activity comes to a stop for a short period during which time the gravel floor is raked and sprayed, the waste

receptacles emptied, instruments and supplies rearranged and replenished, equipment cleaned, tables washed, and the entire array made ready for the oncoming crew.

In a nearby ward tent the eye, ear, nose, and throat department constitutes an independent unit, where their examinations and operations are performed.



CENTRAL SUPPLY ROOM FOR STERILIZING HOSPITAL SUPPLIES

Returning to our patient, we find that he is now awake and enjoying an excellent supper. His meal over, a bath by the nurse, and a comfortable sling for his arm serve to put our patient's mind and body at ease. While he listens to a re-broadcast of one of his favorite radio programs, he contemplates the vast contrast between his present surroundings and the frontline foxhole he so recently left. With a feeling of comfort and security he has not known for weeks, he drifts off to sleep again. And as darkness falls, the tent is closed tightly against the possibility of light leaks guiding enemy planes.

After breakfast the next morning, an early visitor is a Red Cross worker, who brings him cigarettes, toilet supplies, writing paper, and offers a selection of interesting books from the Army Special Service Library. She stops to chat for a while, asking him about his home town and within a few minutes he is proudly showing her a picture of his girl. At the next bed, she stops to write a letter for a burned soldier whose hands are swathed in bandages. In a similar manner, she goes from bed to bed, neglecting no one. Later in the morning, the chaplain comes by, stopping for a moment to chat with each patient as he goes from cot to cot and from ward to ward covering the well-ordered village of the sick and wounded, ministering to the spiritual needs of the soldiers. Later the patient learns that daily services are held in the chapel tent by the Catholic and Protestant chaplains of the hospital.

In the afternoon, our patient is allowed out of bed. He is surprised to find that he feels quite strong and, clad in a clean maroon corduroy bathrobe, he begins a stroll about the hospital area. As he walks down the main road

in the front part of the area, he passes the row of headquarters tents. The chapel tent is marked with the flag of a white cross on a blue field. The dental clinic is next in line. In this tent, three dental chairs are set up, with drills operated by foot pedal and a complete array of instruments ready for use. In the rear part of the tent is a dental laboratory where prosthetics, including full dental plates, are constructed. Three dental officers and five technicians comprise the personnel of this department.



HEADQUARTERS ROW

The remainder of the tents in the row are each marked with signs reading chief nurse, commanding officer, executive officer, headquarters, registrar and information, detachment headquarters, post office, evacuation office and telephone. Near the entrance gate, he notes the motor pool for parking and maintenance of the unit vehicles. As this hospital is moved by trucking units, only a small number of vehicles are included in the equipment. But their tasks of hauling rations, mail, medical and other supplies, and message courier service are so numerous as to require nearly twenty-four hour operation. In maintaining these vehicles, the personnel assigned to the motor pool developed into expert mechanics.



INTERIOR OF THE RED CROSS RECREATION TENT

On his way back to the ward, our patient stops in the Red Cross tent for a moment. A room approximately forty

by fifty feet is formed by the erection of two ward tents joined side to side. Here he sees many ambulatory patients lounging in the easy chairs and divans, engaged in the various entertainment features provided. A radio, a phonograph with records of all types, books, magazines, and newspapers. The writing desk occupies the attention of some; while the more active find an outlet for their energies at the ping-pong tables or the leather-craft section. Several card games are in progress. He signs the guest book in the section allotted to his state and notes here the names of several hometown friends.



RETREAT

Before the evening meal, he is told by the ward attendant that he may walk to the ambulatory patients' mess, which is located in the central area of the hospital section. He is served, cafeteria style, from a battery of field kitchen ranges. The food is hot, well-cooked, and nutritious. He moves on to the dining tent where tables and benches are provided. Having eaten he leaves his dirty dishes on a table at the end of the tent, inwardly gloating that he does not have to wash his mess kit as he has done for so long.



PORTABLE STERILIZING AND SHOWER UNIT

As he leaves, an announcement over the public address system informs him that a movie will be shown at six-thirty in the movie tent. Returning to the ward, he asks the nurse

if he may attend the movie and learns that the doctor has no objections.

On his way to the movie, retreat is sounded and as he comes to attention and salutes, the flag is lowered for the night. As he enters the movie tent, he is reminded of the big top of a circus at home. Four ward tents are joined together with timber supports for the center area, providing adequate space to seat four hundred people. After seeing a late newsreel, a specialty short, and a full-length feature with good sound reproduction, he is rather startled by his abrupt return from the atmosphere created by the picture to the crude, canvas theater. He leaves the theatre in the company of a member of the hospital who works in the linen supply division of the supply department. His questions, concerning the clean sheets and towels which he has noted in the ward, lead to a visit to the linen supply tent. Here he is shown how the dirty linen for the hospital is collected, sorted, and sent to an attached, mobile, quartermaster laundry unit, located near the hospital. A small stream usually serves as water supply for the laundry unit. Through the rear door of the linen supply tent, he is shown a large trailer-type sterilizer which serves the dual purpose of sterilizing all contaminated linen before it is laundered and of heating the water for the nearby improvised shower unit.



LOADING A LITTER PATIENT INTO THE AMBULANCE

When he returns to the ward, a technician is obtaining a specimen of blood from a nearby patient. This blood is taken to the laboratory which occupies the rear half of a ward tent. Here, facilities are available for the more essential laboratory procedures: such examinations of the blood as cell counts, smears for malaria, and the simpler chemical analyses; urine and stool examinations; and bacteriological studies. In the front half of this tent, the pharmacy department acts as a "retailer" for the more "wholesale" medical supply section of the supply department.

Our patient is on a surgical ward. Had his cause for hospitalization been pneumonia, malaria, tonsillitis, or one of the other common medical diseases, he would have been assigned to a medical ward. The medical service and the surgical service are similarly organized. Each is headed by a chief of service and an assistant chief, under whom the ward officers are assigned. In order to maintain the close doctor-patient relationship, the ward teams

of the medical service are arranged in much the same manner as the operating teams of surgery. The group, consisting of the doctor, nurse, and the ward attendants, works as a unit and follows each patient during his entire stay in the hospital. In a similar manner on the surgical service, a doctor serves as both ward officer and operating surgeon for his assigned patients. Throughout the hospital, the preservation of the doctor-patient relationship and the treatment of the patients as patients as well as soldiers have been two dominant guiding principles of the professional services.



AMBULANCES READY TO LOAD PATIENTS
FOR EVACUATION

The following morning finds our patient ready for evacuation to a general hospital in the rear. Any of his clothing which has been lost, damaged, or badly soiled is replaced by the patient's reclothing, a branch of the evacuation department. Having been assisted to dress completely; his medical record is tied to his clothing; his x-rays are given to him; and he is ready for evacuation. In order that this evacuation procedure may move smoothly, an evacuation slip, showing the patient's name and other statistical data as well as his final diagnosis and operation, has previously been sent through the surgery headquarters. Here it is recorded and sent to the evacuation office which motivates the evacuation machinery; the slip finally going to the registrar's office where it is again noted and his record for this hospital completed. The numerous and voluminous reports necessary are made up from these records in this office.

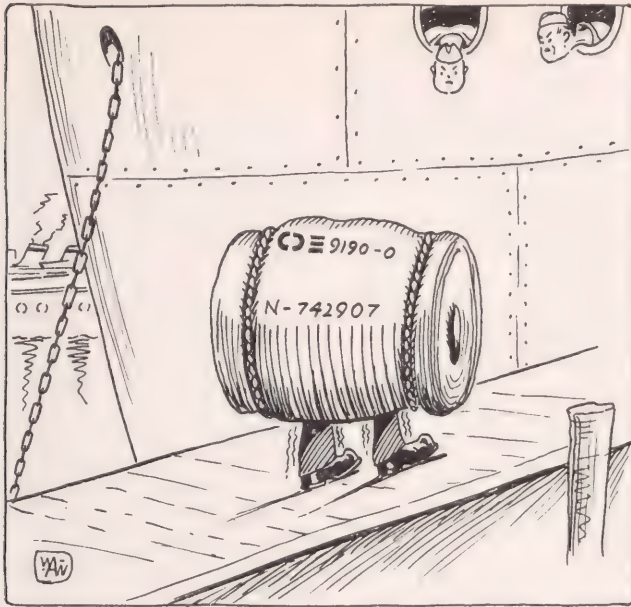
At this time, a litter-bearer enters the ward and calls our patient's name. These patients who are to be evacuated as sitting patients find an ambulance outside the ward en-

trance and are helped aboard with their belongings. At the same time, another ambulance is loaded with litter cases from another tent. The stream of ambulances leaves the hospital area and our patient is on his way to a general hospital and recovery.

The foregoing has been concerned entirely with the care and treatment of a patient. It must be remembered that four hundred people are needed to operate the hospital and they must be fed, housed, clothed, and given recreational facilities. The living quarters are situated at the fringe of the hospital area, and are separated into three groups: one for the enlisted men; one for the nurses; and a third for the officers. Pyramidal tents arranged in rows serve as dwellings. The enlisted men's mess hall and recreation tents are located near their area, and the nurses and officers share a mess hall and recreation tent, usually situated between their living quarters. PX rations are sold once weekly and each person must have a ration card to obtain his allotment of cigarettes, candy, toilet articles, etc. The enlisted men obtain clothing replacements from the general supply, while the officers and nurses must rely on an occasional visit to a distant quartermaster sales store. Medical care is furnished by the personnel in the receiving department, where sick call is held daily in the dispensary section, immunizations are administered as indicated, and the individual health records are kept. The service records and pay accounts are handled by the detachment headquarters for the enlisted men, and by the personnel section of the registrar's office for the nurses and officers. The information and education department operates under the direction of an officer assisted by two enlisted men.

The picture presented intends to be that of the 77th Evacuation Hospital when it had reached a high point of operating efficiency. In the history that follows, one may note the gradual transition from its less efficient infantile period over three years ago to the mature, hardened, field-trained unit which was at work in Germany on V-E Day. During this transition, many changes came about as a result of a widespread and general improvement in army equipment, supply, and procedure. Many of these advances, however, are due to the self-made improvisations devised as the need was felt, and some of which have since been adopted as standard procedure by the Army Medical Department.

Through all its experiences, the 77th has always known a lighter side of life mingled with the hardships and dangers of army field existence. The ability to see humor in the most trying circumstances has always been one of the factors responsible for the "*esprit de corps*" which is probably unsurpassed in any other unit.



Chapter I

EARLY in the summer of 1940, Hitler's armies were overrunning the Low Countries and France, and the European war was forcing its way into the minds of the American people. About this time, the Surgeon General of the United States Army in a letter to Doctor H. R. Wahl, Dean of the Medical School of the University of Kansas, proposed the organization of the professional personnel, doctors and nurses, for an affiliated evacuation hospital unit. The staff and faculty of the Medical School accepted

the proposal and selected Dr. James B. Weaver and Dr. Edward H. Hashinger to head the surgical and medical sections respectively. During the ensuing months, the doctors were selected from the teaching staff, and the nurses were chosen from Kansas City and the surrounding territory. Physical examinations were completed and applications for commissions submitted. During this period, Dr. Hashinger served as a unit director.

When the roll of officers was completed, although commissions had not been received, an attempt at preliminary training was made by means of lectures from assigned chapters of the *Military Medical Manual*. In addition, the entire group on one occasion attended lectures on military and medico-military subjects by members of the Command and Staff School at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas. During one of the lectures a slide was thrown on the screen showing the interior of an evacuation hospital set up in a



LT. COL. WEAVER—NEUVILLE CHURCH—WORLD WAR II



PVT. WEAVER—WORLD WAR I

church in Neuville, France, during the First World War. Dr. Weaver was startled as he recognized himself as the medical corpsman leaning against one of the stone pillars of the church.

December 7, 1941 came, and with it the Japanese sneak attack on Pearl Harbor. The declaration of war which followed crystallized the thoughts and actions of the nation. It was realized that soon the 77th Evacuation Hospital would be an actuality instead of a paper organization.

During the twenty-one dollars-a-month days of 1941, inductees destined for the medical department were as-

ical technician's school here. Pfc. Tilden C. Abrigo attended sanitation school at Carlisle Barracks, Pennsylvania, and Pfc. Lloyd B. Douthit was sent to cook's and baker's school at Fort Riley, Kansas. Pfc. Lester Smolar, Cpl. Lincoln B. Coffee, Pfc. Charles Dry, Pfc. Martin Hoskins, Sgt. James E. Maye, and Sgt. Alvin Kendall had been discharged during the latter part of 1941 since they were over the 28 year age limit; but the declaration of war following December 7, brought these men back into the service with the same unit.

Early spring of 1942 began to bring rumors of more active days for these men of the 42nd, and on May 10, activation of the 77th Evacuation Hospital was accomplished by the transfer of two officers, Capt. Richard S. Fraser and Capt. Martin F. Anderson, and 106 enlisted men.

On the evening of May 16, 1942, a banquet and party were given by the staff of the University of Kansas Medical



SCENES TAKEN AT FORT LEONARD WOOD

sembled at Camp Grant, Illinois, for basic training. For thirteen weeks they received instruction in anatomy, first aid, field sanitation, and other allied medical subjects; in automechanics, cooking and mess management, military law, medical administration and supply. In July, 1941, having finished their basic training, a group of 144 enlisted men was sent to Fort Leonard Wood, Missouri, to activate the 42nd Evacuation Hospital. Here they continued a training program with Capt. Richard S. Fraser as commanding officer. In addition to their unit duties, the men were assigned to all the departments and wards of the station hospital for practical application of their didactic training and worked here during the remainder of 1941 and early 1942. During this period, men were sent on detached service to the various army specialist schools. Pfc. Herbert M. Chadwick, Pfc. William J. Magyary, Sgt. James E. Maye, Pfc. John A. Hostacky, and Pfc. Virgil L. Mayes received training at the Motor Transport School at Fort Crook, Nebraska; at Fitzsimmons General Hospital, Denver, Colorado, Pfc. Warren Bauer, Pfc. Chauncey Felt, and Pfc. Charles W. Vicario received surgical technician's training; and Pfc. Kenneth L. Michael, Pfc. Walter E. Moyer, and Pfc. Ormand F. Cook were trained as x-ray technicians. At Fort Sam Houston, Texas, Pfc. Robert J. Gerlach also had x-ray technician's training, and Pfc. Herbert A. Eldridge, Pfc. Keith Gibbs, Pfc. George K. Hitchcock, and Pvt. Nelson W. Ziesemer attended the med-



CHAPEL

School for the officers and nurses who were to leave the next day. For the first time, the officers appeared in their uniforms, and despite repeated minor adjustments of insignia, belts, and ties, they managed to present a reasonable facsimile of a group of military officers. Those who were leaving were repeatedly reminded by those who were



HEADQUARTERS

staying that, "It will be a wonderful experience, I sure wish I were going with you."

The following day, the group of thirty-five officers reported to Capt. Fraser at Fort Leonard Wood, and after this formality, they were sent all over the post, up and down streets of thick red mud, signing in at the various headquarters. Each of the officers was issued a mattress pad and several blankets, then assigned living quarters in one of the new, two-story, frame barracks on Gobler's



77TH NURSES ON THE DRILL FIELD AT FORT LEONARD WOOD

Knob. Arrangements had been made for the officers to eat at the station hospital officers' mess, where the food was always of excellent quality and quantity. As with all new soldiers, the adjustment of the first few days was fraught with the difficulties of becoming accustomed to saluting, the proper wearing of the uniform and insignia, and the loss of privacy found living with thirty-four other people. After a few days grace, all officers were instructed to purchase fatigue clothes and a training program was initiated. The unit had been assigned by the Second Army to the 6th (Motorized) Division for training purposes. Lt. Col. Hashinger assumed command until the arrival of the commanding officer, Col. Burgh S. Burnet, on June 4. By the time of the arrival on June 15 of the main body of nurses headed by Lt. Bessie Walker as Principal Chief Nurse, the training program was in full swing. Lt. Walker had previously been assistant superintendent of nurses at St. Luke's Hospital, Kansas City, Missouri.

Capt. Morris S. Harless, who had an alarm clock, was assigned to blow a whistle each morning to start the day in the officers' barracks. For his diligence, he received a rain of shoes, but his persistence succeeded in arousing all. A second whistle was blown to indicate the beginning of calisthenics, and those who had failed to don sufficient clothing to appear respectable on the drill field were penalized accordingly. The deep-knee bends, full body twists, and push-ups were always accompanied by moans and groans as this sedentary group of doctors in their third, fourth, and fifth decades were hammered toward the peak of physical stamina. Gone were those days with mornings at the hospital and afternoons at the office, and in their stead were weeks of close order drill, obstacle course and cross country running, and road marches. The afternoon lecture classes introduced the group to such foreign subjects as map-reading, medical administration, military law, mess management, and latrine construction.

The training programs of the nurses and enlisted men were very similar, although close order drill comprised the entire physical training in the case of the nurses. Since no army nurses' uniforms had yet been issued, all their activities were carried out in white hospital uniforms. This spectacle on the drill field caused many a hard-shelled regular army officer to stare with amazement and mutter to himself about what this man's army had come to. Road marches were made by the combined officer and enlisted men groups, and before the training period was finished, nearly all the Ozark roads within a radius of ten miles were familiar to them. These marches were under the command of Capt. Anderson, and the term "Anderson short-cut" became a by-word meaning any devious route several miles longer than necessary, and usually leading through thick woods and blackberry brambles. Since the officers were unwilling to admit their physical softness in the presence of the younger group of enlisted personnel, their complaining was usually reserved for the barracks, where a man's misery was measured by the number of new blisters he could display. After two weeks of army life, a twenty mile hike on a hot summer day had been accomplished.

During the latter part of this six weeks' training period, the mornings were spent at the station hospital, where the professional personnel became acquainted with the proper handling of army medical records and procedures. This was valuable training for everyone. Former office clerks and farmers learned the fundamentals of hospital ward work, and doctors and nurses learned to speak of the common cold as, "nasopharyngitis, acute, catarrhal, moderately severe, cause undetermined." This half-day's work in the hospital necessitated crowding the physical training program and lectures into the early morning and late afternoon hours in order to complete the allotted amount of time necessary for this part of the training.

Many of the officers and men who were married moved their families to the surrounding towns of Rolla, Waynes-



TEN MINUTE BREAK FOR A SMOKE

ville, and Springfield, and since overnight and week-end passes were liberally granted, family ties were maintained.

By early June, the training program had been completed, the horrors of vaccinations and typhoid immunization were past, and such orders as "To the rear, HARCH" or "Inspect gas masks, by the numbers" no longer seemed strange. Anybody could put a legging on the correct leg in something less than ten minutes, and the purposeless flailing of

arms began to resemble hand salutes. Nearly everyone had become accustomed to dogtags dangling around his neck and could now recite his serial number from memory. Several contingents of enlisted men had arrived from Camp Grant, Illinois, and Camp Robinson, Arkansas and the total was now 284.

At this time, the unit was visited by inspectors from the Second Army. The entire amount of equipment then avail-



REST STOP

able was brought forth and arrayed on the drill field, and a simulated evacuation hospital was set up. The one ward tent was supplemented by pup tents set up in rows, each with its sign labeling it the operating room, medical ward, registrar's office, or morgue. The other equipment, consisting of a few litters, a bed pan, a urinal, a folding operating table, a few arm and leg splints, and a small field sterilizer, was distributed at strategic points. The lack of equipment was compensated by the enthusiasm of the personnel, standing rigidly at attention by their appointed stations, anxiously awaiting an opportunity to answer the inspecting officer's questions.

It will probably never be known whether the inspectors were impressed by the fitness of the unit for field duty, or they believed the Second Army would be better off without it. At any rate the unit was alerted at midnight July 24, 1942, and feverish preparations for a move began. Personal baggage was weighed, measured and stenciled with the owner's name and serial number. During the next few days the personnel clerks were deluged with requests for change of pay allotments. Powers of attorney and wills were drawn up, cars disposed of, and last-minute arrangements of personal affairs made before the unit was restricted to the area. An aura of secrecy prevailed; even the telephone became off-limits. Conjectures as to the destination became the chief topic of hushed conversations, and Alaska, England, Iceland, Australia, and Norway were overheard from the scattered groups. Last minute arrivals included an officer and six enlisted men, all of whom arrived within the last forty-eight hours before the unit left Fort Leonard Wood. These rookies of only two days' army experience were solicitously indoctrinated by the "seasoned" veterans of a few weeks.

Several days prior to the departure of the main body of the organization, three advance parties left Fort Leonard Wood. Lt. Robert L. Newman was sent to the New York Port of Embarkation to supervise the assembling and load-

ing of all the organizational equipment of the hospital. A second detail in charge of Lt. Glenn C. Franklin, with T/Sgt. John Malin, Sgt. James Crowe, T/4 Chauncey Felt, and Sgt. Herbert Chadwick, went to Indian Town Gap Staging Area to make necessary arrangements for quarters and mess for the main body. A third detail under Sgt. Virgil L. Mayes, with Pvt. William J. Magyary, Pvt. Hubert Cranford, T/5 John Hostacky, and Pvt. William Agee loaded the unit vehicles on flat cars at the Fort Leonard Wood railhead and traveled with them to a Staten Island terminal. They arrived on the fifth day tired, hungry, and dirty with the dust of Missouri, Indiana, Illinois, Ohio, Pennsylvania, and New Jersey. Their entire combined fortune amounted to one dollar. After considerable difficulty, they were fed and given quarters for the night. Attempting to arrange for transportation to rejoin the unit, they found that no one in the area had ever heard of the 77th Evacuation Hospital. However, on the assumption that they would stage at Indian Town Gap, they obtained travel orders and joined the advance party there.

Meanwhile, the main body of the organization, sweltering in the humid, Ozark heat, was in the throes of frantic packing and repacking. Radios and cameras were reluctantly shipped home, since the movement orders prohibited them. The first struggle with musette bag and bedding roll was somewhat amusing in that this type of luggage was a novelty to everyone. One corporal was heard to remark, "This is the nineteenth time I've rolled this ----- field pack." With true American ingenuity, many managed to include such articles as violins, guitars, and other instruments; even a stray dog who had become the unit's mascot, and an assortment of liquor in their barracks bag or foot locker were stowed away.

On the evening of July 30 all baggage and personal equipment was loaded. Long after taps had sounded, small groups scattered about the area in the soft summer night, sought solace in drink and song. Early the following morning a convoy of trucks arrived to take the personnel to the train. Exhilaration, coupled with the inexperience of all concerned, produced a state of confusion in spite of previously well laid plans. Even with this confusion in the hours before departure at nine o'clock in the morning, breakfast had been served and the mess halls policed, the entire roster checked, and every individual paid in American money for the last time. As names were called out, a line was formed in the company street. Meanwhile, details went through the barracks cleaning out the odds and ends of clothing and equipment which had been discarded at the last moment. As the loaded trucks passed through the station hospital area, envious farewells were waved from the windows and porches of the wards and barracks. As only a partial issue of army clothing had been made to the nurses, they presented a somewhat unmilitary picture, as clad in varied civilian costumes, they climbed down to the station platform from the big trucks. The troop train was loaded with a minimum of confusion, and as it slowly pulled away from the platform, a handful of friends and well-wishers waved a parting salute. Standing at the front of this group, was Col. Millard F. Arbuckle, who called, "It will be a wonderful experience, I sure wish I were going with you."

As the train got under way, the roster was again checked and, strangely enough, no one had gone "over the hill." The train was arranged with two kitchen cars and one food

supply car interspersed between the Pullmans so that each kitchen could service four coaches. These "diners" had previously been equipped by the mess personnel and field ranges of the Philippine type had been set up. The ranges, fired by wood or coal, were erected on the floor of these antiquated baggage cars in a base of bricks and mud. A small stove-pipe led some of the smoke out through the roof. This Spanish-American War version field kitchen presented a discouraging outlook and the war poster phrases of, "Best Equipped and Best Fed Army in the World," were recalled with growing skepticism. KP details were selected by the usual "I want you to volunteer" method, and one large, red-faced volunteer sat in the open baggage car door and peeled potatoes through five states. As the train moved along through St. Louis and headed for Chicago, the rumor of the destination passed through the train, but the name of Indian Town Gap meant little to anyone. At every stop, a guard from each car descended to the platform discouraging any attempts to leave the train.

The train crews were changed at intervals, and depending on the disposition of the conductor, arrangements could be made to buy Coca-Cola, beer, or ice cream by telegraphing ahead to the next stop. There, a beaming red cap would be waiting with the desired articles and an outstretched palm. By midnight the novelty of the trip was beginning to wear off. As the train passed through the outskirts of Chicago, people went to bed, after wearing out such wise-cracks as, "This damned hammock is too small for me." The next morning, August 1, found the train stopped in the industrial district of Cleveland, Ohio. While the engines were being changed, a ten-minute break was called by Col. Burnet, and permission was granted to step off the train. Through the smoke, the morning sunlight revealed a steel mill on the bank of the Cuyhoga River. Barges of ore and coal were being unloaded by a traveling crane, and tiny cars were shuttled about by a toy locomotive.

Later in the morning, as the train stopped at a crossing in Lorraine, Ohio, S/Sgt. James E. Maye saw his wife among a crowd of waving people and talked with her for a few minutes from one of the coach steps. He was naturally accused of having had advance information of the itinerary and of sending ahead a message to his wife. He has never confessed and still maintains the meeting was pure coincidence.

Guards were posted at nearly every bridge of any size along the way. This evidence of the nation at war gave rise to a new crop of sabotage rumors and by evening when the train was still pushing east out of Rochester, New York, a ready explanation for this devious route to Indian Town Gap had been manufactured. Joe said that Tom said that Jake had heard from a porter that a strategic bridge in southern Ohio had been blown up by German saboteurs and all traffic was detoured a hundred miles north. Since, at this early stage of the game, everyone was very gullible about such things, a new rumor passed through the train in an amazingly short time. Just to test the speed of rumors, Lt. Nihil K. Venis maintains that he started a brand new one at the front of the train and then ran through the cars as fast as he could to time its arrival at the rear end. However, when he reached the rear platform out of breath, a soldier sidled up to him, and with the customary introduc-

tion, "Have you heard the latest?" told him very confidentially, a magnification of his own rumor.

Passing through the Finger Lake region at nightfall, the train began to worm its way along a track up a mountain. Dawn brought a vision of gray towns, the dingy superstructures of innumerable coal mines, and huge piles of slate. By shortly after noon, the last stretch of single track had been negotiated and the train pulled up at the small



"AT EASE"

station in Indian Town Gap. Those who displayed any tendency to lag behind in getting off the train were goaded along by a tough captain and his detail who gave the impression that Hitler was just down the road and no time was to be lost in getting at him. Later, when one came to see the almost unbelievable number of troop trains that were shuttled in and out of this busy station each day over that stretch of one-way track, the need for haste and efficiency of this group of railway men was realized.

The truck ride from the train to the camp furnished a view of the mountains that formed a background for the camp itself, which was set on a low hill with a network of paved streets between rows of two-story frame barracks. The trucks stopped in the center of one of the groups of buildings and the waiting advance detail assigned living quarters to the grimy travelers, who, after a three-day train ride, were anxious for a shower. After mess, the real business of "staging" began. A staging area serves a three-fold purpose: to make sure that every soldier's personal equipment is complete; to reduce, by repeated physical inspections, the chance of an epidemic of communicable disease on a crowded troop ship; and to assemble troops for rapid and orderly shipment to the port of embarkation.

The train trip had been made in cotton khaki uniforms which were now about eight shades darker. One of the men, obviously bucking for a promotion, spent most of the night washing and ironing his uniform, and finished in time to turn it in for woolen OD's. The officers made last minute purchases of woolen clothing and underwear at the post exchange so that they might be as well clothed as the men. Nurses were issued clothing to complete a blue uniform with black shoes, blue seersucker dresses for field wear, blue woolen coats and capes, overseas caps, and galoshes. These woolen uniforms, probably made by a converted sack-factory, underwent frantic and extensive alterations in a futile attempt to give the sack a Saks, Fifth Avenue effect. An addition of forty-one enlisted men

from Camps Barkley and Grant brought the total to the prescribed strength of 318.

Steel helmets and liners were issued. This was the first time the new type helmets had been seen, and there was considerable surprise at not receiving the tin-lid type of World War I. Personal baggage was stenciled with the shipment number, 9190-0, which was to be the 77th's title for traveling incognito. The entire outfit received typhus immunizations. One morning at four o'clock, the men were roused from their beds and lined up by roster in the pitch dark, after two and a half hours of standing, the process of taking passport photographs finally began. The results needed only a label "Wanted" to complete the resemblance to police department posters.

During these days and nights of falling in, lining up, falling out, no communication with the outside world was allowed. Letters could be written but were to be held at the staging area until the unit had arrived safely overseas. The climax of this staging period came with the announcement that the official address was now A.P.O. 1289, C/O Postmaster, New York, N.Y., and printed post-cards announcing this fact were completed and to be posted with the letters.

Among the permanent staff of the staging area were a few "old heads" at this game of preparation for overseas movement. They were always lurking about the barracks and grounds to advise the uninitiated concerning their packing and future needs. It had always been suspected that they represented manufacturers of certain post exchange items, for some people bought enough salt water soap to lather the Atlantic Ocean. These enterprising people could also be coaxed into smuggling liquor into the camp at not less than one hundred per cent profit. When there was nothing else to do, the entire group was lined up and marched around the area with full pack and baggage to rehearse ship-loading "by the numbers."

FORT LEONARD WOOD PROMOTIONS AND COMMISSIONS

JUNE 8, 1942:

TO STAFF SERGEANT—James E. Maye.

TO SERGEANT—Tilden Abrigo, Lincoln B. Coffee, James H. Crow, Virgil L. Mayes, and Edward E. Ryan.

JUNE 19, 1942:

TO SERGEANT—Herbert M. Chadwick.

TO TECHNICIAN 4TH GRADE—Floyd A. Clarkston, Richard B. Logan, and Joseph L. Skoda.

TO TECHNICIAN 5TH GRADE—Robert M. Aberl, Ormand F. Cook, Charles J. Dry, Clifford G. Everson, John W. Gabbard, Robert J. Gerlach, Arthur J. Girty, Ashpy Hedger, Robert M. Hofele, Earl J. Homan, John A. Hostacky, William J. King, Lilburn H. Lay, Walter E. Moyer, Donald J. McKenny, Sanford J. Van Baalen, Charles W. Vicario, and Marvin H. Wunderlich.

INDIAN TOWN GAP PROMOTIONS AND COMMISSIONS

JULY 30, 1942:

TO TECHNICAL SERGEANT—John P. Malin, Ellsworth A. Frederick and Joseph F. Earley.

TO STAFF SERGEANT—Ormand F. Cook and Nelson W. Ziesemer.

TO SERGEANT—Herbert A. Eldridge and Roland B. Stotter.

TO CORPORAL—James E. Mease.

AUGUST 1, 1942:

TO TECHNICIAN 4TH GRADE—Robert M. Aberl, Allton T. Allen, Robert W. Block, Merle V. Dickerson, Arthur J. Girty, George J. Hitchcock, Earl J. Homan, Martin L. Hoskins, Donald J. McKenny, James K. Meadows, Kenneth L. Michael, Walter E. Moyer, and Charles W. Vicario.

TO TECHNICIAN 5TH GRADE—Joseph A. Kohut, Herbert W. Seelen, Lester Smolar, Vernon C. Starr, Ira M. Williams, Jack D. Woody, and Henry Smith.



Chapter II

AFTER four days of concentrated preparation at "The Gap," a final queue was formed to board the six-wheeled G. I. taxis. The captain of the reception committee at the station seemed to resent anyone being there a second longer than necessary and the train loading was accomplished within a few minutes. During the trip through New Jersey, many people conjured visions of marching down long rows of waving flags, boarding a boat with bands playing, and the citizenry lining the docks cheering their troops off to victory. Reality came when the train ground to a stop in a dimmed-out Jersey railway yard. Since the lineup for going abroad ship was to be maintained at all times, the process of struggling off the train, overloaded with packs and baggage, was attended with considerable confusion. The entire line would be held up by someone, groping frantically in the dark to recover a helmet or some other bungle-some piece of equipment which had been dropped. The officers had not yet learned that a val-pack will hold more than one man can carry, and the handles were pulled off many of these "sacks" within the first few minutes. Some of the men, finding their packs too heavy to wear or carry, were soon dragging them along the rough brick pavement. Slowly, and with more than a little profanity, the overburdened troops struggled along the darkened tracks to a waiting ferry on the Jersey side of the Hudson River. When the last man had been crowded on the ferry and had collapsed on top of his baggage, the boat whistled out of its slip and headed up-stream. Only those who had energy enough to stand could see the dim outline of the Manhattan skyline across the river. The ferry slid along the far bank of the river and silhouettes of many ocean-going vessels of varying size could be made out in their berths. Hopes alternately rose and fell as a luxury liner or a tramp steamer would appear to be the destination of the ferry. Finally it swung around to face the incoming tide, and nosed up to the end of a large pier. Shouldering packs and baggage, the queue entered the pier shed and began to file past the attending officer's desk. As

this man called out each soldier's last name, the individual replied with his first name and serial number as a means of identification, and was given a blue card with his name and the number of the compartment to which he was assigned for quarters, or in the case of officers and nurses, the state-room number. The nurses, who had arrived by an earlier train, were waiting on the dock, and were rummaging through several large crates of clothing and shoes. Unaware of the nurse's clothing issue at "The Gap," Lt. Robert Newman had obtained a duplicate clothing issue. With the pained expression of a hen-pecked husband on a shopping tour, he stood apart and watched this bargain-counter wrestling match as the nurses attempted to find better fitting shoes or skirts. While this mob scene was being enacted, nine nurses looked down from the ship's rail with mingled expressions of curiosity and amusement. These nurses had been assigned to the 77th from Camps Eustis and Pickett, had boarded the boat earlier in the day, and were already comfortably settled in their quarters.

As soon as the last man, struggling under his burden, had gone up the gangplank, packs and gear were thrown off in the sleeping quarters, and everyone returned to the open decks to watch the activities connected with the sailing of the ship. Just as tugs were preparing to slip the boat from its berth, however, the loud speaker system announced all open decks out of bounds to personnel, and ordered everyone to his quarters. About one o'clock in the morning the ship was pulled out into the stream and began the trip down the Hudson and out through New York harbor. A few people who had remained on deck, contrary to orders, were able to see the Statue of Liberty.

As the ships left the harbor the convoy was formed, and the gray light of dawn furnished a striking picture. Cruisers, destroyers, and corvettes kept moving about the fringes of the convoy, maintaining constant vigilance against the enemy U-boats. Later, as the sun came out, the signal flags and the Allied National ensigns could be clearly seen. The ships were irregularly spaced over an area of several miles, but still seemed to cling together for comfort and security. The threat of U-boats necessitated a zig-zag course, and every few minutes the entire convoy changed direction. Since absolute radio silence must be maintained, all communication between ships was carried out by means of blinker lights. The first day out, several large oil-slicks and scattered bits of flotsam and jetsam gave mute evidence to the fact that all these precautions were necessary.

The ship, *H.M.S. Orcades*, former luxury liner and flagship of the Orient Line, was a vessel of over 23,000 tons which had been converted into a troop transport. Many of the more luxurious fittings, such as mirrors, pictures, and other expensive adornments in the foyers and companionways, had been removed or were protected by wooden panels. Among the 5,000 troops abroad were a medical regiment, several field artillery units, an armored unit, anti-aircraft battallion, the 77th, and a few smaller units. Troops were stratified according to the British custom. Field grade officers received the best accommodations, the lieutenants' quarters were not quite as good as the captains', and the nurses' staterooms were much the same as those of the captains'. The enlisted personnel were crowded into compartments in the hold. There was little light here, and practically no ventilation. The blackout period necessitated closing the portholes for fifteen hours

MEDICINE UNDER CANVAS

out of every twenty-four, and the few ventilators were woefully inadequate.

The men slept in hammocks, on tables, and on the deck, one below the other. This arrangement of sleeping facilities gave rise to numerous pranks. On one occasion, a hammock loaded with a man and his equipment was made to fall on Hughie Brewer, who was all set for the night on the table below. "Second-layer" Brewer's remarks about anyone who would pull such a dirty stunt left no doubt about his feelings in the matter.

Sanitation presented quite a problem, since "latrines" were inadequate, and frequently it was necessary to stand in line an hour or more. Razor blades, candy and gum wrappers stopped up the drains on numerous occasions. Washing and shaving facilities were extremely crowded, and one had to queue for a salt-water shower.

After the generous meals they had been accustomed to eating, the food served aboard the *Orcades* suffered badly by comparison. Breakfast consisted of dried fruit, boiled fish, a cup of tea, and white bread studded with an occasional cockroach. Lunch was usually lamb in some form (the boat had recently stocked at a port in Australia), rarely vegetables, sour pudding with custard, and tea. Supper was either fish or lamb again, an infrequent orange, butter or bitter marmalade, and the usual bread and tea. This diet became almost revolting to the vigorous American appetite within a few days. Messing facilities were very poor. Mess kits filled in the galley were carried back to the sleeping compartments, which also served as mess halls. A part of this route led through the officers' and nurses' dining room. This spacious salon retained many of its pre-war luxuries, including carpeted floors, upholstered chairs, immaculate table linen, and a fine array of silver. Obsequious, white-clad stewards deftly served the five-course dinners. The food, disguised by strange names was essentially the same as the men received. For instance, "bubble and squeak" proved to be boiled cabbage and potatoes, a favorite British breakfast. The men were particularly incensed on several occasions as

they carried their breakfast past the crew's mess eating ham and eggs. On a partially sliced ham the U. S. Inspector's stamp was plainly visible. A striking commentary on the food is found in the fact that the one meal universally voted best by the men consisted entirely of boiled navy beans.

The repeated breakfasts of "bubble and squeak" reduced the attendance at the morning meal in the officers' dining room. One of the cabin stewards, Charley, experienced considerable difficulty each morning getting the officers in one of his cabins out of bed so that the room could be cleaned. One morning he entered the cabin, speaking in dulcet tones of the fine griddle cakes on the breakfast menu, and within a few minutes the occupants had rushed off to breakfast. As the disgruntled officers returned to the cabin, realization of the horrible fate he might suffer had dawned on Charley, and he locked himself in the bathroom, refusing to come out until leniency had been promised.

Instructions had prohibited bringing liquor aboard the ship, but several canteens filled with the contraband were carried aboard. Early in the trip, someone started the vicious rumors that any alcoholic beverage in a canteen became poisonous by the chemical action of the alcohol on the metal, and several nurses poured their precious stocks of this sea-sickness remedy down the drains.

On the morning of August 7 the convoy steamed into the harbor of Halifax and dropped anchors. The ships remained in the harbor all day, and by evening the rumor-mongers had it that shore leave would be granted to spend the Saturday night in the city, whose bright lights, beckoning in the distance, seemed to emphasize the sense of separation from the homeland which had already begun to make itself felt in so many hearts and minds. The following morning, the submarine net was pulled back from the harbor's mouth, and the convoy, now larger by several ships, filed out to the open sea. As the *Orcades* began to move out, some wise guy yelled loudly, "Last call for over-the-hill."

Each person became closely attached to his kapok life-preserver on the first day abroad ship, and these "float



S.S. "ORCADES" SUNK BY ENEMY ACTION OCTOBER 10, 1942

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sacks" were carried over the arm or worn at all times. At the daily boat drills, they were fastened into place in the proper manner, but at other times were dragged or thrown about, turning one shade darker each day as new dirt and grime from the decks and floors collected on them. They were constant companions at meals, in bed, and on deck, and although there were many complaints at having to carry them about, everyone realized their importance and necessity.

Blimps and Catalina flying boats patrolled the waters about the convoy during the first few days, but as their range was exceeded by the convoy's progress, they gradually disappeared from the air. One of the cruisers shot a small seaplane from its catapult at times to furnish a certain amount of air reconnaissance.

Of considerable interest and comfort were the chapel services held by both Catholic and Protestant chaplains. Recreation for the men was very limited due to the crowded conditions. A small library was available, and the organization of a swing band and several boxing exhibitions helped to lighten the monotonous hours.

The sick-bay of the ship was taken over by the personnel of the 77th. Doctors, nurses, and ward men were assigned to take care of the usual run of pneumonia, tonsillitis, and minor surgical cases. On one occasion, nearly all the men in C and D compartments became violently ill with diarrhea. The sick-bay was soon overflowing, and, armed with several bottles of paregoric, one of the medical officers went down into the compartments to treat the remainder. This incident, of course, magnified the shortage of plumbing facilities.

A few days out of Halifax, several ships, bound for Iceland, left the convoy. The weather, which had been ideal up to this time, took a sudden turn for the worse, and as the sea became rougher, faces turned greener. Each day, fewer people appeared for meals, and flimsy excuses were manufactured to evade the ignominy of admitting seasickness. The cold wind, laden with rain and salt spray, drove many off the decks to the relative comfort of their quarters. The tiny corvettes were tossed about like rowboats by the mountainous seas, and some solace was gained from the fact that the *Orcades* was a relatively large ship. The ship's crew, given to understatement by virtue of being British, always minimized the weather in the presence of the soldiers, and seemed to derive considerable amusement from the plight of the unhappy GI's.

In contrast to the conditions of the enlisted men, the officers and nurses were provided with a large, expensively furnished lounge on B Deck where they could sit in a comfortable chair or divan and watch the elements at work outside through large plate glass windows. After lunch and dinner, coffee was served here. A bridge tournament was run off and the winners were given small, silver loving cups. The nurses were required to be in their quarters by eleven o'clock at night, after which the lounge became devoted largely to poker and black-jack. A smaller lounge furnished similar facilities for warrant officers and the first three grades of non-commissioned officers, a distinction rarely made in the United States Army.

During the latter part of the trip, an attempt was made to classify the personnel on the basis of their training and abilities, and each man was interviewed briefly by the chiefs of the medical and surgical services. Tentative as-

signments to the various departments of the organization were made on the basis of this information.

The convoy passed through particularly dangerous waters during the last few days of the voyage, and all personnel were ordered to sleep in their clothing. The sea became more calm as the convoy entered the northern end of the Irish Sea, and the first sight of the low rolling hills of Ireland through the mist was an extremely welcome sight. British Spitfires on patrol over this busy sea lane were a form of introduction to England. The convoy began to split up as some of the ships put in at Glasgow, and by five o'clock on the evening of August 17, 1942, the *Orcades* and two other troop ships, including the *West Point*, had negotiated the mine fields of the Mersey River and were being tied up at the Prince's Landing Stage at Liverpool. In the stream of the river, the superstructures of several half-sunken ships protruding from the water, were evidence of numerous visits by the Luftwaffe. Two of the buildings on the dock behind the landing stage had received direct bomb hits, and a large warehouse had been completely demolished and one dock basin ruined when an ammunition ship had been hit. The barrage balloons, bobbing above the river and docks area, flashed silvery reflections of the setting sun.

The sea-weary troops, their spirits bolstered by the sight of terra firma, crowded the port rails and threw cigarettes, coins, and wise cracks to the dock workers and the Royal Army Military Police on the platform below. Cheers and jeers came from the men aboard as the British soldiers scrambled about in their hob-nailed shoes fighting over the coveted cigarettes.

Numerous parties of British and American civilian and military authorities boarded the ship to take care of quarantine regulations and to make the necessary arrangements for debarkation. Since England's laws regarding the importation of dogs are quite severe, all compartments were searched by the quarantine authorities, but the dogs, which had been seen from time to time during the trip, were no longer in evidence.

By ten o'clock that night all necessary arrangements had been completed and debarkation began—by the numbers. After struggling through the narrow companionways and down the gang-plank with their heavy packs, the officers and men were lined up on the dock and began the march to the Lime Street Railway Station in the center of Liverpool. During the march, the grotesqueness of a partially destroyed city in complete blackout became apparent. The sounds of music and laughter, coming from the darkness as pubs were passed, only served to heighten the feeling of strangeness and loneliness of being in a foreign land. The jagged outlines of bombed buildings against the sky, the broken skeleton of a burned out church, the faint greenish glow from the shaded traffic lights all contributed to the eerie atmosphere as the troops stumbled along over the rough cobblestone pavement.

At the station nearly everything seemed strange. The train cars with outside doors to each compartment drew as much attention as the small locomotives with their high-pitched whistles. Most of the railway employees visible were women in grimy, blue denim overalls pushing the baggage trucks about, coupling the cars, and calling the train departures over a loud-speaker system. Here and there an obviously 4-F man could be seen. The nurses had been brought to the station in buses, and as the entire

unit boarded the train repeated admonitions were passed along concerning the blackout on the train. The sights of the wrecked city had made such an impression on the entire group that these warnings were hardly necessary. At Nottingham the train stopped at some time during the night and paper bags of food were passed out to everyone by the NAAFI (Navy, Army, Air Forces Institute, and approximate equivalent of the U.S. Army Post Exchange Service or PX). In the paper bag was a sausage roll, meat pie, one tomato, potato chips, and a piece of chewing gum. This last item was probably an all-out attempt by the English to make the Americans feel at home. Canteen cups were filled with a hot liquid which the majority of people decided was tea, although Capt. John Bowser is still undecided about it. The train passed through the Midlands, and by noon the next day was creeping through the marshalling yards in the outskirts of London. From there the way led southwest to the Salisbury Plains. The bright clear day afforded a pleasing picture of some of the loveliest parts of the English countryside. Although everyone was tired after sitting up all night in the crowded carriages, many stood in the passageways of the cars for the entire distance in order to get a better view of passing panorama of quaint villages and peaceful landscape. The universal

and direct the dock hands to the proper pile with it. The 9190-0 markings on each article aided materially in this process. Although it was assumed that the dock workers were speaking English, it was almost impossible to understand their dialect, and sign language was used for the most part. Working hours were so irregular that only snatches of sleep were possible between the sporadic periods of unloading, and it was necessary to maintain a guard on the unloaded equipment at all times. The winch operators devised a means of entertaining the other workmen by hooking the cargo nets on some of the ship's rigging and dumping the contents into the murky dock basin below.

This procedure always brought a round of uproarious laughter from the workmen and remarks of disgust from the Americans. Barracks bags usually floated long enough to be rescued by long boat hooks. Heavier articles sank and it was necessary to obtain a professional deep-sea diving crew to go down after two field kitchen ranges and several lockers. One of the foot lockers, fortunately belonging to another unit, had apparently sunk so deep into the mud that it could not be retrieved. After five days, the unloading was finished and the equipment had been loaded on the small British box cars. What had been hauled in



ENGLISH COUNTRYSIDE

use of brick and tile in the construction of the houses; the small neat gardens outlined by trim hedges; the gentle roll of the brilliant green hills; and the profusion of flowers all combined to make an impressive picture for eyes which had seen nothing but ships and sea for twelve days. The growing feeling of "something is missing" was finally explained when someone pointed out the lack of the hideous, glaring billboard advertisements which smear and defile the American scenery. Arriving at Tidworth in the middle of the afternoon, the officers and men marched about one mile north of town to an area known as Tidworth Park. The nurses were taken by bus to Salisbury, about 20 miles away, where they were billeted at the American Hospital.

Meanwhile, a detail consisting of Capt. Max S. Allen and eight men, T/Sgt. John Malin, 1st Sgt. Marvin Bowers, T/5 John Hostacky, Pvt. Fay Toney, Pvt. Stanley Pilch, Sgt. William Hagan, Sgt. Herbert Chadwick, and Sgt. Virgil Mayes, had remained at the ship to supervise the unloading of the unit baggage. This included the foot lockers and bed rolls of the officers and nurses, barracks bags, field kitchen ranges, athletic equipment, and a few crates and boxes of records and office equipment. In the loading process, the equipment had been scattered through the three holds of the ship and as it began to come over the side in nets, it became necessary to keep at least one man on the dock by each hatchway to identify the equipment

one American baggage car required five of these freight cars. The detail and the baggage arrived at Tidworth one week after the main party, and were especially well received by the shivering officers who had been anxiously awaiting their bed rolls. None of the personal baggage had been lost, although several articles had been water soaked.

At Tidworth, the huge, brick barracks buildings, once the home of the famous British 8th Army, now housed the American 1st Division which had just arrived, having gone through the "Gap" about four days ahead of the 77th. The camp at Tidworth Park was laid out on the thick green sod of a slope at the foot of a low hill. The few buildings, actually sheds, were made of corrugated iron and contained some very antiquated, coal burning stoves and few of the other essentials of mess equipment.

The men and officers, quartered in British "Bell" tents scattered about the area, were issued two British blankets. In the case of the men who were carrying three blankets in their field packs, this made adequate bedding, but for the officers, whose bed-rolls had not yet arrived, the two blankets were considerably inadequate. Although it was August, the weather was quite cool even during the daylight hours, and the nights were chill and damp. Several times each day, showers drenched the area, and the rain poured through the leaky tents.

An ablution hut consisted of a roof, under which were several long troughs fitted with faucets dispensing liquid ice for washing and shaving. Showers were available in another building, but the water was warm for only a short period each day. The latrines were of the "honey-bucket" type, always without paper, and in the British manner, the non-commissioned officers and privates used separate buildings. This class distinction was ignored by the American troops. Other troops in the same bivouac area included the 38th Evacuation Hospital, which made the crossing in the same convoy with the 77th, and some artillery units. The 48th Surgical Hospital arrived several days later.

Mess kitchens were operated by British personnel, and much more time than was considered necessary was used in passing through the long chow lines. The food was a repeat of the fish, lamb, and tea routine of the ship. Breakfast cereal was an unrefined oatmeal, received as little better than barn-floor sweepings by most of the men. The line for washing mess kits was also very slow, and frequently an hour and a half would be occupied by the procedures of one meal, only about ten or fifteen minutes of which were actual eating time.

An attempt at formality was made in the officers' mess by having the food served by attendants, but the dirty hands of those serving, along with certain other factors such as one cook's habit of spitting on the griddle to determine its heat, only added to the host of rising complaints about the mess in general. On one occasion a greasy plate of gray, creamed beef was set before Lt. Robert Forsythe, and his prompt emetic action caused several hasty exits from the mess tent to prevent other similar episodes. Finally, the entire mess system in camp was taken over by American personnel, and although the rations were the same, the palatability of the meals improved considerably.

Bees were everywhere. When a sugar bowl was opened, a swarm of them flew out—usually to land on the marmalade. Since the marmalade was not such a delicacy to Americans, everyone was content to use this as a decoy for the bees in the hope that they would keep off the forkfuls of food on the way to mouths.

On the evening of arrival, a dash was made for the NA AFI hut for the first taste of English beer. The warm, unfamiliar taste was disappointing, however, and many half-emptied mugs were left on the counter. The scones, crumpets, and other food served at the snack bar were always a welcome diversion from the lamb and cabbage. The pubs at the nearby village of Shipton-Ballinger and in Tidworth furnished an introduction to this phase of English life, and several men became expert dart players.

Camouflage, blackout, and the other precautions of passive defense against air attack brought many new experiences. Regulations included the removal of all white articles from outside the tents in daylight hours. Laundry (done in helmets with cold water) must be hung out to dry at night, and frequently was given several further rinsings by the rain. No smoking was allowed in the open during blackout hours, and flashlights must be dimmed by colored paper and always pointed toward the ground. Tents had to be carefully closed to keep in the feeble light of the candles, which were the only form of artificial light available. On one occasion, an air-raid was made on a nearby town. The numerous alert and all-clear wails of the sirens in several surrounding communities were heard each day and

sometimes several times daily. The eerie tones of these sirens in the dead of night were a very disturbing sound at first, and resulted in considerable loss of sleep by these uninitiated soldiers. Scattered throughout the camp were several zig-zag slit trenches for personal protection against enemy air attacks. During this time, a broadcast by Lord Haw-Haw (William Joyce) a Nazi propagandist, announced that the German High Command was aware that troops of the U.S. Army were arriving in the Tidworth area, and that the Luftwaffe would soon send over a welcoming party. Although this never came to pass, the incident only served to heighten the feeling of apprehension.

T/Sgt. James L. Sales was placed in charge of a small dispensary for the entire camp, but medical supplies were very meager, and on one occasion, Capt. Robert Menees used a pair of mechanic's pliers to perform a tooth extraction, whiskey and aspirin serving as an anesthetic. No other professional work was done by the hospital here. Calisthenics and close-order drill were held each day, and one long road march, in open formation as a part of the passive air defense, was made. A GI track meet was held at the stadium in Tidworth, and included such comic procedures as blind-fold pup-tent pitching and three-legged races. The 77th came off with quite a number of first and second prizes. Sgt. Roland B. Stotter went to a chemical warfare school in Salisbury, and Capt. Morris Harless and Sgt. Virgil Mayes attended a camouflage school at Tidworth.

Forty-eight hour passes were issued for visits to London, Bournemouth, and Southampton, and shorter visits to the cathedral towns of Winchester and Salisbury provided diversion from the routine of everyday camp life. The extent of these activities was somewhat limited by an acute lack of the necessary funds. Poker and black-jack gave way to free pitch. This deplorable condition was especially pronounced among the officers, and the few who still had money loaned it all to the others. Word got around that the London branch of the Chase National Bank of New York would cash a personal check. Several officers borrowed enough money to get to London, but the small amount which one could obtain in this manner was little more than the expense of the trip. What little money was available was converted to English currency, and a working acquaintance was made with such terms as pence, ha'penny, threepence, shilling, and "bob." Only a few had fortunes large enough to know the meaning and value of florin, half-crown, pound and guinea.

As the American soldiers became better acquainted with the English people and their customs, there were fewer derogatory remarks made about their pronunciation of the English language.

The air above the camp area furnished ample opportunity for practice in aircraft identification, and within a few days the book shop at Tidworth had exhausted its supply of illustrated books on the subject. The huge, four-engine Lancasters, the Whitworth-Whitleys, and many other smaller planes flew over the camp area repeatedly, and practice parachute jumps were seen as British paratroopers dropped to nearby fields. An R.A.F. fighter strip was within easy walking distance, and here the Mustang fighters, with British insignia, were first seen. Criss-cross patterns of searchlights probed the sky at night as the training planes underwent night flying exercises.

Meanwhile the nurses led a pleasurable existence at the

American Hospital in Salisbury. This organization, better known as the Harvard Unit, was composed of American personnel who volunteered long prior to Pearl Harbor, and was set up in well equipped buildings on the outskirts of



"THE HAUNCH OF VENISON"

the city. The nurses were quartered in one wing of the hospital with nurses of the 38th Evac. and 48th Surgical Units. In spite of the somewhat crowded conditions, there was ample compensation in the comfortable recreation hut with radio, reading-room and snack kitchen. The warm welcome of Lt. Bernice Wilbur and her gracious hospitality were important factors in making the stay here enjoyable. The nurses were also granted passes to London and the nearby towns. No actual hospital work was done, but early morning calisthenics, gas mask drill, and lectures were part of the regime.

On September 4, a detail of seventy-five officers and men left Tidworth and traveled by train to Frenchay Park, on the edge of Bristol, to take over a new hospital plant still under construction there. This institution was being built by the people of Bristol as a crippled children's hospital, but as the need for hospitals for American troops increased, had been taken over by an American station hospital. The buildings were one-story brick and tile construction with flat roofs, and were well dispersed among the trees of a flat, park-like area. Several of the buildings, including living quarters, wards, operating ward, and administration building, had been completed, and the advance detail now set to work cleaning up the buildings and installing the British equipment as it was brought in. Within a few days the remainder of the officers and men, and all the nurses arrived. The officers and men considered such things as a good roof, a bed, and a warm building strictly as luxuries, and with the boost in morale attendant upon getting out of the cold, wet tents, the work of cleaning up went forward rapidly. American rations were now available and the food, prepared in the large, modern kitchen was, on the whole, excellent in comparison to the fare at Tidworth.

A follow-up of the interviews on the *Orcades* was made, ratings commensurate with a man's ability and training were given, and the personnel assigned to the various departments accordingly. Within a short time the hospital was ready for operation and patients were received from the American troops in the surrounding area and from the U.S. 2nd General Hospital at Oxford. Since this was the first time the unit had operated as a hospital, it served as a trial run, and each day several valuable lessons were learned by all departments of the organization. The receiving department, which at first was thrown into confusion by more than one ambulance load of patients at a time, soon became efficient enough to unload a fairly large convoy of ambulances while the drivers were having chow. The mess department soon learned that at each meal, a few of the professional personnel would be delayed by duties and that ambulance and truck drivers must be fed at irregular hours.

A concentrated, basic training program was given to the officers and men who had joined the unit too late to receive this training at Fort Leonard Wood, and each morning the small group of "rookies" went through their ritual of close order drill, hand salute by the numbers, and gas mask drill. On the wards, the newly assigned men were taught how to read a thermometer, give a bed bath, make beds, take blood pressure and pulse, and serve meals. Officers and nurses served as instructors in these classes, and the practical application of these principles went on under the surveillance of the previously trained technicians. In the operating room, new men were taught sterile technique. Although there was little actual surgical work, teams were organized and the fundamentals of plaster of Paris casts and splints, and the handling of sterile surgical instruments, sutures, dressings, and other equipment were taught. This training was done entirely with British equipment and it was repeatedly necessary to point out that American instruments and supplies were different. The electricians became acquainted with the intricacies of British wiring and fixtures, and since there were no GI tools, they spent about fifty dollars of their own money to buy tools from the local iron-mongers so that defective sockets, fuses, lamps, and switches could be repaired. The utilities section operated the boilers which supplied steam heat to some of the buildings, and hauled coal for the small stoves in the other buildings. The untried plumbing system created many problems. Since this was the first working experience with the 52-series of medical records, it was necessary for the registrar's section to hold frequent conferences with the medical officers concerning the proper execution of these forms.

From the officers of the surgical service, several specialist teams were organized, and the members of these teams attended post-graduate courses in their particular field at various hospitals and medical schools in England. Maj. Howard Snyder, Capt. Wendell Grosjean, and Capt. Harwin Brown attended a course in thoracic surgery; Capt. Joseph Lalich and Capt. Tom R. Hamilton received special training in blood transfusion methods and the treatment of shock; Capt. John Bowser and Lt. James E. McConchie went to X-ray school; and Capt. Francis A. Carmichael and Lt. Robert Forsythe attended the course in neurosurgery at Oxford. The latter two officers came home steeped in the traditions of Oxford and wearing, with their class A uniforms, the "old school ties" of the college to which they had been attached.

The headquarters and finance section began to function more smoothly, and on September 10 a paymaster was located and the unit was paid for the first time in about seven weeks. With money in their pockets, the extracurricular activities of the 77th people began to increase. Trips to London on 48-hour pass were fairly numerous, and attendance at the local dances, pubs, and theaters increased considerably. Many acquaintances and friendships were established with the citizens of Bristol and its outlying villages of Staple Hill and Fishponds, some of which are still maintained by correspondence. The Lord Mayor of the City of Bristol, resplendent in silk hat and the other regalia of his office, visited the hospital with his retinue and had lunch at the officers' and nurses' mess. As more and more of the members of the unit were invited into the homes of the people of the community, there was less misunderstanding between them. In spite of the fact that these people were on strict food rationing, they generously shared their meager stores with the American soldiers and apologized because they had so little to offer. Soon, nearly every man had a favorite pub, a skittle league, or a girl in the neighborhood to occupy his off-duty hours. A party was given by the enlisted men in one of the larger vacant buildings on the hospital grounds, affording an opportunity to show the English girls the "American way" of throwing a party. The affair was very well attended, and although the girls did not care for the American beer which they maintained was too cold, they were amazed by the huge amounts of sandwiches, candy, and peanuts so generously proffered them. Several nurses helped with the decorations and refreshments, and worked in the powder room.

The officers and nurses shared the same mess hall and recreation rooms and in off-duty hours a constrained group of nurses would congregate in one end of the recreation hall while an equally constrained and austere group of doctors kept to their end of the room. An attempt to organize an officers' club failed chiefly because at that early stage no need for organized recreation was felt. The first ration of British NAAFI spirits was distributed equally, but left an excess of nearly two cases of gin. A dance had been planned, and in the punch, extremely well concealed in the various fruit juices, were the two cases of gin. After an hour or so of freely imbibing this delicious and healthful punch, the most haughty became jovial, rank lost its privileges, and informality prevailed. Many experienced difficulty in navigating the fifty yards or so of concrete walk to their quarters in the blackout, and several unkind things were said about construction companies who would leave open ditches on the grounds. After this ice-breaking episode, congeniality became more evident in the mess and recreation halls. Occasional social functions by both civilian and military groups of the British in the Bristol area were attended by groups of officers and nurses who were always impressed by the stiff formality of these affairs.

Under the management of Capt. Howard Dukes, the first American PX ration was made available. An excellent variety of chocolate bars, peanuts, American canned beer and cigarettes could be purchased in plentiful amounts. At this time officers and nurses were issued clothing ration coupons, and shops in the city were besieged with requests for woolen sweaters, Scottish plaids, English tweeds, and other well known British products.

The first big consignment of mail came on about Sep-

tember 12, and although most of it was from four to six weeks old, it was no less welcome.

While at Frenchay Park, three medical administrative corps officers, Lt. Leslie B. Williams, Lt. Randall O. Thompson, and Lt. Oscar E. Milnor, and two medical corps officers, Lt. Leonard J. Haas and Lt. Edward J. Keeney, joined the unit.

On the large commons bordering the hospital grounds, a baseball diamond and a football field were laid out, and the local citizenry always turned out in force to see these American games played. On occasions, the Americans were given an opportunity to see a game of cricket.

English air defense officials gave several instructive lectures and demonstrations to the entire group on such subjects as bomb disposal, use of air-raid shelters, and rescue and first aid to bombing casualties. Usually the lecturer had had considerable experience during the air



THE WELL-KNOWN POULTRY CROSS IN SALISBURY

blitzes of the summer and early fall of 1941. Representatives of the National Fire Service also gave lectures and demonstrations on the latest methods of fire-fighting, especially concerning defense against attack with incendiary bombs. Soon, the 77th had a crew of fire-fighters who were quite adept with the "sturdy stirrup pump" and the other apparatus.

Before leaving the States, an effort was made to collect and assemble all items of equipment needed to operate the hospital. *A Table of Basic Allowances* listed every piece of equipment, and by consulting it, one could see at a glance how many hospital ward tents or how many pen-points were considered necessary. Few samples of this equipment were available during the training period, and most of it had been assembled at the port of embarkation by Lt. Robert Newman. At the time the organization left the States, approximately eighty to ninety per cent of the equipment had been procured, assembled, and labeled with the code number of the organization for shipping on a freighter. On its arrival in England this equipment was stored in a medical supply depot, where it was to be held until the unit was ready to use it. Another evacuation hospital needed its equipment before the 77th did however, and, since they were only about thirty per cent equipped, an exchange of needed articles was arranged. This made it imperative that the 77th supply department procure the missing seventy per cent in short order. This proved to be

a very difficult task. Supply depots were dispersed all over England, and the entire supply organization was still in a state of development which made for confusion in attempting to locate a particular item. All roads appeared the same, and there were no signs on any highways to guide an unacquainted traveler. So completely were the English people indoctrinated in security regulations at this time, because of a feared German invasion of England, that one could stop at a cross-road and ask a native for directions and receive nothing more than a disinterested, "I don't know" for a reply. It was necessary for an officer to accompany the triplicate or quintuplicate copies of requisitions for equipment, and since the organization had only one of its six allotted medical administrative officers assigned to the supply department, several doctors, entirely unacquainted with supply procedure, were pressed into service. Many and anguished were their cries when a long



CORRIDOR CONNECTING THE WARDS AT FRENCHAY PARK

day's journey in the cold, damp English weather without food had failed to net any of the elusive supplies. Only too frequently they would ferret out a supply depot in an obscure warehouse or chocolate factory to be told that the particular item in question had been transferred to another depot in an entirely different part of England, or that they were then awaiting a new shipment from the States, the last shipment having fallen prey to a Nazi submarine in the Atlantic. Notable among the minor items of scarcity was toilet-paper. None of the American variety was available, but after considerable adroit negotiation, a limited supply of the British product was procured. This proved to be of a quality similar to the paper on which the "pulp" magazines are printed, but each section was carefully printed with a crown and the trite statement that this was "His Majesty's Government Property."

It soon became apparent that having ninety per cent of the equipment did not necessarily mean that the hospital would be ninety per cent efficient. For instance, without the shock-proof tube cables, which weighed only a few

pounds and constituted only one item on the list, the x-ray department's other 9,243 pounds of equipment were entirely useless. Such problems as this could not possibly be recognized by the supply officer himself, since he was a member of the quartermaster corps, and had had no previous experience in matters medical. This necessitated frequent conferences with the chiefs of the various services to determine which items were absolutely essential even if they had to be purchased on the open market, and which ones could be substituted by makeshift improvisations.

Since no electro-surgical unit was included in the *Tables of Basic Allowances*, and none could be obtained through army channels, a collection was taken up from the officers and one was purchased on the open market for four hundred dollars.

During the latter half of October, 1942, rumors of a big move began to be buzzed about camp. The officers of the medical department, strictly on a hunch, had purchased textbooks on tropical medicine, and lectures on the subject were given to the enlisted men. Supplies poured in, extra winter clothing was issued, and gas-protective ointment distributed. Pup-tents were issued to the nurses and they were given instructions and demonstrations on pitching them. Two newspaper correspondents, Frank Kluckhohn of the *New York Times*, and William W. White of the *New York Herald-Tribune*, were attached to the organization. These preparations led to discussions on Russia's climate, the price of Persian rugs, "*Soirs de Paris*," the Belgian Congo, and many other parts of the world. When Lt. Robert Newman was again sent off, this time to Liverpool to assemble the equipment and see that it was properly crated and marked, the air of mild anticipation became one of feverish expectancy. The natural desire for new experiences and more tangible contact with the war was tempered with a reluctance to leave this garrison type of life at Frenchay Park, which seemed an ideal spot to "sweat out" the war.

The personnel was divided into A and B groups, each capable of operating as a separate unit complete with surgeons, nurses, technicians, and clerical personnel. All baggage was marked with a design of three bars and a circle, and packing began. Many found that the souvenirs they had collected while at Frenchay had swollen their baggage to the point of nearly bursting the seams of the barracks bags, and, to add to these difficulties, six cans of C-ration, several bars of D-ration, and odd cans of fruit juice, corned beef, cheese and sardines were issued. On October 26 personnel from the 2nd Evacuation Hospital arrived to take over the remaining patients and the hospital.

The first group left on the evening of October 27 and the second was scheduled to go on October 29. All personnel were restricted to the immediate area on these last two days, but on the evening of the 30th, when the enlisted men's roster was checked, only about half the detachment could be found. As on the previous evening, the restrictions had been disregarded, and many of the men were in the pubs of the neighborhood (chiefly Stan's) engaged in impromptu farewell parties. Fortunately, the detachment commander proved to be quite lenient when a final roll call shortly before departure revealed everyone present.

The junior grade officers of the second movement had never been advised as to the exact time of departure, and were told to remain in their quarters until transportation

MEDICINE UNDER CANVAS

called for them. This group of twelve officers, seeking the solace of the bottle, were still patiently waiting, and were oblivious to the fact that everyone else had gone when Annie, a British ambulance driver who had been attached to the hospital, discovered them and whisked them into an ambulance and through the blackout to the station at Filton Junction just in time to get aboard the train as it pulled away from the platform. T/5 Lloyd Benifield and T/5 James Challacombe were ill in the hospital at the time of departure and had to be left behind.

FRENCHAY PARK PROMOTIONS AND COMMISSIONS

AUGUST, 1942:

TO 1ST LT.—Bessie Walker and Beulah A. Frydendall.

OCTOBER, 1942:

TO 1ST LT.—W.O.J.G. Edgar E. Smith.

TO TECHNICAL SERGEANT—Bernard Colbert, William L. Davis, and Chauncey M. Felt.

TO STAFF SERGEANT—Rodney W. Heinen, Walter L. Mason, Jr., Philip M. Maurice, Walter E. Moyer, Henry Smith, Roland B. Stotter, and William J. Walsh.

TO SERGEANT—Arthur J. Girty, Frank J. Mascia, George G. Nick, Donald E. Nicksch, Gordon G. Weber, and Arthur F. Zimmers.

TO TECHNICIAN 4TH GRADE—John M. Dzurny, John W. Gabbard, Earl L. Hoard, Lilburn H. Lay, Kenneth F. McConnell, John J. McDermott, Lester Smolar, and Paul M. Tackett.

TO CORPORAL—Otha R. Bridges, Emory H. Bright, Glenn A. Chaloupka, Charles J. Dry, Arthur L. Fincannon, Robert M. Hofele, Victor L. Korsak, and Joseph A. Uzas.

TO TECHNICIAN 5TH GRADE—Leo M. Beck, Lloyd J. Benefiel, Robert M. Buchholz, James A. Burkett, Charles H. Christmas, John W. Clason, Earl E. Coffman, James E. Cover, Reid L. Cox, James L. Cox, Franklin T. Dee, Stanley J. Garmus, David Grimes, Wilbur H. Gum, Arthur A. Hanneke, Ashpy Hedger, Harry M. Hoover, Leo J. Jensen, Rollin V. Jerome, John Kammerer, Harlan Y. Kesterson, William F. Kunze, Edward W. Lambert, George R. Law, Earl J. Masten, Maurice M. McQuiddy, Earl C. Modrall, Robert N. Moore, Harold M. Neis, John V. Nordlund, James L. Partin, Harold W. Rasmussen, Charles Rosen, John E. Russ, Frederick L. Schloredt, William T. Stackpool, Robert D. Stine, Walter J. Thom, Fay Toney, and Jong Fong Yee.

TO PRIVATE FIRST CLASS—Frank H. Anderson, William I. Alford, Chester N. Brown, Charles E. Camp, Eugene Carver, Clarence G. Christian, Howard E. Clute, Wayland E. Crawford, Doyle B. Crosten, George R. Duncan, Jr., Gendah L. Elliott, Arndt A. Fiechtner, James H. Fox, Herbert M. Fritzsche, William R. Frye, David E. Gibson, John T. Greco, George M. Haire, George A. Harden, Kenneth C. Hubbard, George A. Jarvis, Leon P. Johnson, Earl L. Lair, Richard F. Lane, Bernard J. Lettau, Ford H. McParland, George L. Meeker, Edward A. Orwell, Thomas J. L'Neil, James T. Parnell, George K. Peterson, Lacy M. Pittman, John A. Sallen, James T. Scott, Elmer L. Seabolt, Harold E. Sherrill, Ben R. Tanner, Salvatore Trapani, Henry Turnbull, Gus W. Wagonlander, Adolph Wild, Rudolph G. Wolff, and Harland H. Woody.

P.O.E. NOVEMBER, 1942:

TO TECHNICIAN 5TH GRADE—Mervin G. Lockwood and Ben R. Tanner.

JOINED THE UNIT AUGUST, 1942:

1st Lt. Leonard J. Haas, M.C., and 1st Lt. Edward J. Keeny, M.C.

OCTOBER, 1942:

1st Lt. Oscar J. Milnor, M.A.C., 2nd Lt. Randall O. Thompson, M.A.C., and 1st Lt. Leslie B. Williams, M.A.C.

LEFT THE UNIT OCTOBER, 1942:

T/5 Lloyd Benefiel and T/5 James H. Challacombe, to hospital.



Chapter III

THE train ride to Liverpool was uneventful and tiresome, the large part of it occurring in blackout hours. The first group arrived at a railway siding near the Prince's Landing Stage on the afternoon of October 29 and immediately boarded the *Uruguay*, an American troop transport, formerly of the South American Line. A huge black mongrel, naturally called "Blackie" had attached himself to the unit for rations at Frenchay Park, where he had received his basic training, including a morbid dislike for civilians. Since he was too large to be put into a barracks bag as several other outfits had done with their dogs, he was being led across the dock on a leash when two M.P.'s seized him and started to lead him away. Goaded, coaxed, and whistled at by his buddies on the deck of the ship, he suddenly broke away from his captors, and within a matter of seconds was up the gangplank and with his unit again. Blackie's career with the 77th ended two days later, when just prior to sailing, the Navy personnel put all canine friends ashore.

The second group arrived at the same dock on the afternoon of October 30 and boarded the *Brazil*, a sister ship of the *Uruguay*. At two o'clock on the afternoon of October 31 the ships sailed out into the Irish Sea and the next morning found them anchored in the Firth of Clyde, near Gourock, Scotland.

These ships, engaged in the South American passenger trade before the war, had been converted into army troop transports and were manned by Americans. The gun crews were American Navy personnel. Of over 20,000 tons, each of the ships had been fitted to accommodate roughly 5,000 troops. The staterooms had been stripped of their luxurious fittings and were equipped with tiers of canvas bunks on steel frames. As compared with the *Orcades* a marked leveling influence was noted in the accommodations. The enlisted men now had quarters very similar to those of the officers and nurses, and all the arrangements showed an attempt to equalize the comforts and privileges of the two groups. Latrine facilities for the

enlisted men, however, were still somewhat inadequate. The enlisted men's mess was clean, and although the tables in the mess hall were not equipped with seats, the food was of excellent quality and quantity, and was identical with the food which the officers and nurses were served in their mess. Only two meals were served each day, but the amount of food eaten at these two compensated for the lack of a third. All the men had been issued mess cards noting their section, deck, and a number. Strict compliance with this system was required, and guards sent ambitious individuals back when they tried to get in before their turn. The comment on the contrast between the food on these American staffed ships and the food eaten aboard the *Orcades* was forceful and oft-repeated. On one of the boats large serving trays were used, and on the other, mess kits.

There was sufficient space for everyone on the many open decks, and this furnished a form of recreation. A band, playing over the public address system, provided entertainment in the evening. A selection of books and magazines was available for diversion.

The mess halls were used as recreation halls in the evening. Boat drills were held every day, and assignments of a medical officer and a nurse were made to each life boat. The personnel of the 77th operated the ships' hospitals, which were well stocked with drugs and instruments. Besides the usual run of cases, a small epidemic of diarrhea occurred on the *Uruguay*. A Lieutenant Colonel, Artillery, conducted a one-man campaign on the proper washing of mess equipment and stopped the epidemic very quickly.

On November 1, about nine o'clock in the evening, the convoy, now complete, sailed out of the harbor and headed into the North Atlantic. The first day or two brought cold weather and considerable rain, but as the course turned southward, the warm tradewinds brought the troops out to



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U.S.A.T. URUGUAY PRIOR TO CONVERSION
FOR TRANSPORT USE

the open decks. Porpoises were seen playing in large schools, their backs flashing in the sun as they humped in and out of the water. Whales, both actual and mythical, were pointed out on several occasions.

On one of the vessels of the convoy, a member of the crew died; burial at sea was performed and all flags were carried at half-mast for that day.

Since no official information had yet been given out, the troops were still ignorant of their destination, and each day brought a new crop of rumors. On November 4, however, the officers were briefed and a copy of the booklet, *A Guide to North Africa*, was given to everyone. The two ships, *Brazil* and *Uruguay*, among others, were bound for Oran, Algeria, and maps of the city were brought out to show the location of the hospital where the 77th was to work.

During the following days, orientation lectures on various subjects were given by British and American officers, some of whom had lived in North Africa and were well acquainted with their subjects. Tropical diseases were discussed and methods of prevention and treatment outlined; a geographical review of the area was presented; a historical resume and an over-all picture of the political situation was given; and the customs, religion, and habits of the native Arabs and the colonial French were thoroughly discussed. Atabrine tablets for the suppression of malaria were given out together with a packet of water sterilization tablets, dust goggles, and anti-gas eye protection shields. English money was exchanged for gold-seal American invasion currency. As the 77th was one of the few units to be paid aboard ship, the fact spread around and before long numerous would-be gamblers were looking for suckers in the 77th. The intended victims submitted quickly but in a short time most of the money on the ship was in the pockets of the 77th men.

On November 8 the electrifying news that North Africa had been invaded by combined British and American forces came over the radio and was broadcast through the ships over their public address systems. The circling movements of the convoy as it had stalled for time on the

Morocco, and by midnight the decks were crowded with troops who had stayed up to get a view of Gibraltar. The outline of the huge rock could be seen faintly in the light of a partial moon.

In the calm waters of the Mediterranean, extra precautions were taken, and the speed of the convoy increased as the submarine danger became greater. None of the



ORAN HARBOR

underseas craft was actually seen, however, and no ships were damaged. Radio broadcasts added to the tension as announcements were made of the Central Task Force landing and of heavy fighting in Oran and the surrounding area. There was some feeling of relief when half of the convoy, by an adroitly executed maneuver, peeled off and headed for Oran. Since this harbor was completely blocked by sunken ships of the French and British Navies, it was necessary to put in at the port of Mers el Kebir. Arriving in the outer harbor at eleven o'clock the night of November



ORAN HARBOR—VIEW FROM FORT SANTA CRUZ

11, the ships passed in single file around the breakwater and anchored for the night.

Many stood about on the decks until late that night trying to get a view of the city, but in the darkness only dim rows of lights marked the streets, and the other scattered lights in the partially blacked out city afforded a very poor picture. Early the next morning, the decks were again crowded as everyone sought to get a clearer view of the harbor's surroundings. The city of Oran could not be seen from the ships, since the intervening mountain of Santa Cruz blocked out this view. The village of Mers el Kebir, built in a semicircle around the harbor, lay at the foot of the surrounding hills, and was made up of the docks and harbor facilities, a small, water front business section,



6th and 7th now changed to a direct course through the Straits of Gibraltar. As darkness fell, the convoy passed the lights of the international city of Tangiers in Spanish

and a few houses. The white stucco buildings with their red tile roofs stood out in bold relief. Palm trees lined the streets and roads which were already crowded with people, donkeys, and vehicles. On the rim of the hills, an old stone fortress showed evidences of having been the target of Allied artillery. On the side of the hill, French Colonial soldiers could be seen digging graves and burying their dead in the rocky soil of a small cemetery.

As the *Brazil* moved in to tie up at one of the long concrete piers, orders were passed to be ready to disembark immediately. By noon, the officers, nurses, and enlisted men had struggled out of the ship and were waiting on the pier, surrounded by more stuff than could be carried. The inexperience of the unit was reflected in the uniforms of the nurses who were wearing their blue skirts and blouses despite the fact that they were anticipating a twelve-mile march. They appeared very incongruous lined up on the dock with several hundred GIs. A roll of toilet paper dropped out of one of the nurse's packs, and whatever tension existed was broken by the laughter as the embarrassed nurse pursued the stray paper across the dock. The nurses were ordered back aboard ship to await further orders but were picked up later and taken across the harbor to Oran in motor launches and waited in a customs house till the nurses from the *Uruguay* arrived. They were taken across town in trucks with armed guards to the civil hospital, "*Hopital Civile*."

The hospital, enclosed within a high stone wall, was made up of about thirty stone and stucco buildings arranged in rows along the palm-lined streets, each with a capacity of from one to two-hundred patients. Other smaller buildings housed the administrative offices, kitchens and dining halls, x-ray and laboratory sections. Nearly all the Allied military patients were in one of these buildings—pavilion ten, although a few were scattered in other wards. As the nurses climbed off the trucks and started up the steps of the building, dripping with enthusiasm, (musette bags, gas masks, canteen belts, and other paraphernalia), they were met by six or seven other nurses of the 38th Evacuation Hospital. They had landed late on D-day at St. Cloud, twenty miles east of Oran, and with little activity in their sector, these nurses had been sent to the Civil Hospital a few hours prior to the arrival of the 77th, but had not been there long enough to accomplish anything. They left immediately as the 77th arrived. The sight which greeted the nurses as they entered the building was appalling. There were only a few beds in the building, and the patients were lying about the rooms and halls on litters, filthy blankets, or piles of discarded clothing. Cases of pneumonia, dysentery, and contagious disease were lying beside seriously wounded soldiers, some of whom had undergone amputations. Dressings and bandages had been so scarce that, in some instances, wounds had been covered with paper. A few wounded French and Arab soldiers were scattered among the Americans. The two French doctors remaining on the staff had attempted to do what surgery they could on the more serious cases, but lack of equipment had precluded anything but the crudest type of care.

During this time the officers and men had been lined up at the docks and started on the way to the hospital. The full field packs were augmented by every sort of article. Blanket rolls were swollen by candy cans, shaving lotion, cigarettes, and musical instruments, and by six cans of C

ration and six bars of D ration. One man carried several cartons of cigarettes in his trouser legs above his leggings. Loaves of bread, a baked chicken, whole hams from the ship's galley, wrapped loosely in paper or odd pieces of clothing, were carried under-arm or hung on to the bulging packs. The officers were also heavily loaded with pistol belt and canteen, gas mask and musette bag, besides odd shaped packages of food, surgical instruments, first aid kits, and bottles of medicine. The march, led by Col. Burnet, started out in the hot sun at a lively pace. Within the first fifty yards, the group had been accosted many times by ragged children who held out their dirty hands



A TYPICAL CITIZEN OF ORAN

asking for "shoon gum" and "cigarette pour papa," and as the march went along they became more numerous. Frequently they greeted the soldiers with shouts of, "Hi Ho Silver," which had been the password on D-day. The route of march seemed extremely devious, and while Oran was south of Mers el Kebir, the march was north, then west, and finally south. The Arabs, who had appeared so picturesque from a distance, lost their glamour as a closer view revealed the filthiness of their bare feet and the dirt on their clothing. Their burnouses which had looked so snowy white from the ship became a dirty gray, and the gayer colored robes and turbans lost their brilliance. Over all, the stench of unwashed bodies, scattered garbage and

sewage which lay in the streets and gutters, and other odors not yet identified permeated the air. The mind's eye picture, which most of the group had developed of the colorful and romantic Arab, was rapidly being blotted out by these first impressions. They also began to doubt the authenticity of the blue guide book to Africa. Many of the Arab women wore veils over their faces, but even this lost its mysterious attraction after a few of the toothless, tattooed countenances had been seen.

The pace set by Col. Burnet was fairly comfortable for a time but by the end of the second hour parcels were becoming unwrapped, straps were biting into shoulders, perspiration soaked through the woolen clothing, and feet were in various stages of protest from blisters and aching arches. Pvt. Bill Bailey was carrying a wooden box of Beech Nut chewing tobacco and only the generous nature of his buddies who helped him carry it saved the precious hoard. The roadside was littered with discarded equipment. Rifles, ammunition, articles of clothing, shelter halves, and even rations had been cast aside as troops of all services attempted to lighten their load on the march from the ships into the city. Only a few army vehicles were seen and several dilapidated trucks and buses, with charcoal burners fastened on the rear for fuel, chugged along the streets.



THE FRENCH BASTILLE AND SANTA CRUZ

Jutting into the sea between Mers el Kebir and Oran lay Santa Cruz mountain, with a French bastille and a church on its crest silhouetted against the sky. The road passed through a long tunnel in the mountain, and emerged on the other side, revealing a good view of the city, whose white buildings, red tile roofs, steeples and minarets reflected the bright sunlight of that hot November 12.

As the group stopped for a ten minute rest along the sea wall on the north rim of the harbor, someone pointed to a freighter in the outer harbor which was spouting great clouds of black smoke and flashes of fire. This ship, loaded with vehicles, gasoline, and ammunition, had struck a mine, and was now blowing itself to pieces. By the time the sound of the first explosions reached the ears of the spell-bound spectators, those who had field glasses could see jeeps and trucks being blown off the ship and falling into the sea. Finally, after the survivors had been picked up, a cruiser closed in and fired a torpedo into the stricken ship. During the excitement of this spectacle, Col. Burnet dropped his helmet and it rolled down the wall into the sea.

Rounding the foot of another hill the group entered the city proper. Now, where was the Civil Hospital? No one in the group could speak enough French or Arabic to make themselves understood by the polyglot of Arabs, French, Spanish, and Portuguese who were seen on the streets, and few of whom knew the location of the place if they could have been made to understand. After getting lost several times, retracing steps, and stopping every now and then to get oriented, the entire group was near the point of collapse when they started up a terraced series of over one hundred steps. A halt for a short rest was called when they reached the top of this obstacle, in a cloud of perspiration and profanity. The consolation was the fact that everywhere throughout the city, they saw similar groups of tired, sweating, heavily-laden and limping soldiers—all lost.

About this time, a nondescript individual, who understood a little English, attached himself to the company and led them to the hospital. Lt. Col. Hashinger, who had come ahead in a jeep from the ship, was waiting at the hospital and guided the men to a large new bakery building in the neighborhood which was to serve as quarters for them. Arriving there about six o'clock in the evening, packs and gear were thrown off in heaps and the exhausted travelers collapsed on the bare concrete floor or on sacks of soya beans which were stored in the building. The twelve-mile hike had left its mark on nearly every man, but only two men had fallen out of the formation, which was a much better record than some of the combat units, supposedly hardened hikers, could show.

As everyone was eating a cold C-ration and fanning his feet, a detail of officers and men was picked to go to work immediately in the hospital, and the others were told to get some rest so that they would be ready to work in the morning. An hour or so later, volunteers were asked to go to work at once, for it had been discovered that in addition to the one hundred or more patients in the Civil Hospital, there was a similar group in the Military (Baudin's) Hospital in another part of the city.

The group on the *Uruguay* disembarked shortly before midnight of the twelfth, and marched along the same route through the tunnel to Oran. Lt. Col. Weaver, in command of this group, together with Maj. Wayne Bartlett (who can always produce a good map of any desired area), were able to negotiate the winding streets of the city with little difficulty in spite of the blackout. Each man had tied a white handkerchief around his arm so that the group could be easily kept together. When they reached the main gate of the hospital, a French attendant denied any knowledge of American soldiers in the building, and only when someone saw Capt. Joseph Lalich walking through the area in the early light of dawn was the group led around to the bakery. As soon as they had disentangled themselves from their equipment, and eaten a C-ration, they were sent to relieve those who had been working all night.

Meanwhile, the nurses at Civil Hospital had been working about two hours when the officers and men arrived, and by that time had succeeded in removing much of the filth and rubbish from the floors of the halls and rooms and had singled out the patients who needed a doctor's attention immediately. Nearly all the patients were asking for water, and although it was available in the city's water system, it had been mixed with sea water and was not fit to drink. They passed out what little water they had in their canteens, and gave optimistic promises of more



MEDICINE UNDER CANVAS

as soon as it could be found. A few basins were located in one of the other buildings, and using their own clothing for towels and wash-cloths, they had begun to clean up some of the befouled patients. Helmets were used as emesis basins, bed pans, and wash bowls. One small gas burner was discovered and water was heated for hot compresses; empty wine bottles served as hot water bottles.

The fact that the nurses had not eaten since morning began to make itself evident as the evening wore on, but those who had C-rations or other food in their musette bags passed it out to the patients after pooling it and making a stew on the gas burner. A few of the nurses had carried hypodermic syringes, morphine, codeine, and aspirin in their musette bags, and were able to relieve much of the pain and suffering.

As soon as the officers arrived they brought out the few supplies of medications and instruments which they had carried in their packs. Maj. Mahlon Delp had carried a thousand tablets of sulfadiazine tied up in a sock and although this had seemed to be folly at several times during the long march, his foresight began to pay dividends as the tablets were passed out to the fever-ridden patients. Another officer had carried a spinal puncture needle, a thoracentesis set, and a Levine tube. With the spinal needle and Levine tube, a very seriously-ill patient, who was brought in the second day unconscious from meningitis, was treated to recovery. All his medication, food and water was administered through the tube for the first four days. Many of the surgeons had carried instruments, and with some borrowed from the 38th Evacuation Hospital and the 1st Medical Battalion, enough were assembled to start doing surgery. The first amputation, performed by Maj. Mervin Rumold, was done with an ordinary hack-saw.

The conditions at the Military Hospital were so chaotic as almost to defy description. The patients were dirty, their wounds entirely neglected or inadequately cared for, and they had had no food for three days. This hospital was an old stone structure which formerly served the French Army and Navy personnel in the vicinity. The entire hospital was surrounded by a high wall and the entrance gate led into a center courtyard. Around the courtyard were buildings of varying size and architecture suggesting a gradual expansion over a period of many years. The Allied military patients had been brought in as prisoners of the French during the early phase of the invasion, and had been placed in the fourth floor wards. During the two or three days before the arrival of the 77th, the few French doctors of the staff had done what little surgery they were able to do, but lacked the necessary supplies, equipment, and skill to cope with the more serious cases. Of the 116 patients, about forty-five per cent were British. During the first twenty-four hours, the 77th personnel could do little other than attempt to bring some semblance of order out of the chaos.

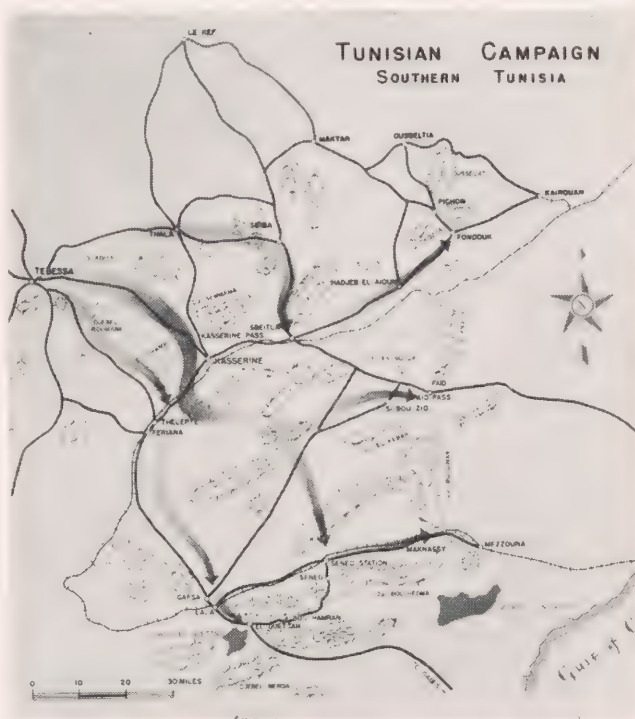
The long wards were equipped with white enameled beds with longitudinally placed steel strips curved convexly upwards as springs, but which produced an uncomfortable humped-back effect in most instances. The mattresses were old, dirty, and infested with vermin. Many of them were wet with urine, and the odor in the wards was noxious. The blankets were equally filthy, stiff with blood, vomitus, and excreta. The overwhelming dirt and filth was everywhere, on floors, walls, and windows. The patients were, for the most part, quiet, and the oppressing silence was

broken only by an occasional moan and the sorrowful tone of a bell which tolled every fifteen minutes.

A few French nuns and two hospital orderlies were attempting to cope with the situation, but had little with which to work. The Germans had taken most of the instruments and much other equipment. Drugs were practically non-existent, and the wounded had had nothing to relieve their pain. They had been fed only a little black bread soaked in wine, and had had little or no water.

Besides the neglect from the standpoint of sanitation, drugs, and nursing care; the bulky, ill-fitting casts, inadequate wooden splints, and the bloody, uncomfortable dressings needed changing. A number of the patients were irrational just from dehydration and diarrhea. Records consisted of a few illegible words of French scribbled on scraps of paper.

During the first night and morning, little could be done except to give the few drugs which had been carried, pass out water, and substitute the small number of clean blank-



ets for the more befouled ones. A number of Carlisle bandages had been "promoted," and during the first day and second night all the dressings were changed, so some idea of the nature and severity of the wounds was obtained. French ideas concerning war surgery differed markedly from American precepts in two important respects; debridement to the French surgeon meant a wide-opening and mass-excision of the wound, and an amputation was done for even slight wounds, whereas an American surgeon would have amputated only as a last resort. Thus it was that when the dressings were changed, huge, gaping, infected wounds were found. Many of the patients had had amputations of one extremity, and a few had lost two.

One of the first dressings changed was that of a British sailor. His shoulders, arms, and chest were swathed in bandages which were sticky with blood and covered with dirt. As no anesthetic was available, his screams of pain

as the dressings were pulled from the stumps of both arms were terrifying. Some of the 77th men who had had little previous experience found this too much as a beginning of their medical career. Both arms had been amputated above the elbows; an incision ran up the stump of the right arm and down over the right side of the chest.

Sulfanilamide had been poured into the wounds in generous amounts, so that cakes of the drug formed white masses; tight gauze packs in the depths of the wound had increased the pain and allowed the infection to run rampant.

The problem of food and medical supplies was so acute at this hospital that it was decided to clean up the patients as much as possible, and as they became transportable to move them to the Civil Hospital.

In the midst of all this turmoil and misery of the first night, an itinerant G.I. wandered in looking for a "pro" station. He was sent on his way and advised to keep his eyes open for snipers rather than sirens.

Pvt. William J. B. King had undergone an appendectomy at Frenchay Park and had not completely recovered from it at the time of embarkation for Africa. He had managed to get aboard the *Brazil* with his luggage and then was admitted to the ship's hospital. Two days after docking at Mers el Kebir, he was taken to the hospital in an ambulance. Through an error he was taken to the Military Hospital, where he took one look at the vermin-ridden beds and spent the next two days sitting in a chair until he was moved to the Civil Hospital.

The atmosphere during the first few days cannot be recorded in words. Through all the misery and suffering the valiant spirit of the wounded and sick prevailed. In the midst of heat, filth, thirst, pain, stench, and hunger the patients refused to become depressed and their gratitude for any form of care was a constant stimulus. The enlisted men of the 77th, many of whom had never seen a patient before, struggled against almost insurmountable difficulties. Thrown into a strange land and given almost no equipment or supplies, they toiled incessantly through long hours of heat and gloom, in a dirty, poorly-lighted house of misery. With their own hunger and thirst forgotten, and their sleep only an occasional brief nap on a concrete floor, they ignored their discomforts, repressed their tension and uncertainty of the military situation and learned to do difficult and often revolting tasks simply by doing them. The work of a hospital corpsman, a surgical technician, or a medical supply sergeant is not contrasted with the heroic actions of the combat troops at the front, but at times the grinding, unceasing diligence, devoted to the care of the sick and wounded rises far above any call of duty and glorifies the hospital corpsman. For their work and leadership, the above also applies to the nurses and officers. The experiences of these hectic days were a far cry from the gleaming floors and starched uniforms the nurses had known in civilian life, and even in their previous army duties. Their ability to abandon completely the life to which they had been accustomed and wade through filth in order to carry comfort and courage to their sick and wounded comrades won for them a deep respect from both officers and men. There is little doubt that in these unconventional surroundings, the work and care by the nurses was a great factor in the successful results attained by the unit, and that their very presence was deeply appreciated by the patients.

During the first few days after arrival, two other pavilions were taken over at the Civil Hospital and the surgery patients were moved into them; pavilion ten continued to house the medical wards, receiving section, and administrative department. The communicable diseases were isolated in a small building near pavilion ten. Records were made out on all patients, and for the first time, the registrar knew the hospital census and could locate the patients. During this period most of the medications used came from a field desk which had been packed at Frenchay Park by Capt. James Fisher and brought along as part of the unit baggage.

Lt. Clio Shirley, who was ill with pneumonia, Lt. Gladys Perdue and Lt. Elaine Schuler had been left aboard the *Uruguay* until a place could be arranged for Lt. Shirley at the Civil Hospital. A detail of eight men was left at the dock to guard the hand luggage of the officers and nurses and the "A" barracks bags of the men. The following day a hunt for 9190-0 was held as the men's "B" bags were removed from the hold and sorted from hundreds of others. The nurses' and officers' bed rolls had to be carried out of the holds of the ships by the men and lowered over the rail, one by one. The enemy had destroyed the unloading facilities of the docks, and the ship's machinery was busy with more important supplies. Trucks were very scarce at this early stage, and only after several days' struggle was all the baggage finally delivered to Oran.

During this baggageless period, the heavy packs which the men had carried on the march were proving their worth. Each man had three blankets which now furnished considerable comfort during the few hours available for sleep on the bean bags. The officers and nurses, however, had only a raincoat or overcoat for bedding, and many swore a solemn oath that never again would they become separated from their sleeping bags. Although the days were quite warm, the nights were cool, and the draughty floor of the bakery building was always cold as well as hard.

The nurses had hastily piled their equipment in a corner by a stairway in Civil Hospital when they first arrived, and this served as a sort of headquarters and rendezvous for them during the following days. A dark closet under the staircase was used as the chief nurse's office. In all the turmoil, no one had thought of living quarters for the nurses. A small room, a stairway landing, and a large flat roof on the third floor of pavilion ten were taken over by them and soon the place looked like a bomb had hit it. Since no baggage had arrived, the nurses were sleeping in their clothes on the floor with only a raincoat or overcoat for bedding the first few nights. Eventually their luggage began to come in and bed rolls were spread out in the already crowded space. All personal belongings were strewn helter skelter, and everyone's possessions became mixed up in the general muddle. One small bathroom on the second floor was both inconvenient and inadequate. A cold salt-water bath and sticky shampoo in a helmet was certainly no incentive to cleanliness. Clothing washed in this water showed little improvement in its appearance. Blankets and other wearing apparel taken from the bed rolls was sprinkled and smeared with powder, shoe-polish and nail enamel from broken bottles and boxes. Wrinkled coats and suits hung precariously from stair rails, doors and windows. Opened suit cases served as a dressing table and bureau. Many mishaps occurred as nurses tried to

find their way through the jumble at night; heads and feet were accidentally stepped on and no sleep was undisturbed. These first few days of their actual contact with the war were not what they had visualized, and what they did and saw was not soon forgotten. But in the chaos of cleaning up and taking care of the wounded, little thought was given to personal discomforts.

After ten days of crowded living conditions, the nurses were moved to the Hotel Quantin in the city. This pseudo-modern and dingy hotel was a marked improvement; although beds, mattresses and doubtfully clean sheets were viewed with some skepticism, but they soon forgot about bugs and took advantage of what little there was to offer. After patiently waiting in line the maid would unlock the bathroom door and for ten francs one could have a tepid salt water bath. As other hospital units arrived in the area, their nurses were billeted in the same hotel. Soon, 250 nurses were living in the hotel at one time.

Within a few hours after the 77th took over the hospital, new cases began to come in as word was spread through the surrounding area that a hospital was now in operation.

The first night, several of the crew of the freighter which had been sunk in Oran harbor that afternoon were brought in. Many of them were severely burned, but only one member of the crew, a fourteen-year-old boy, had been lost. Many cases which had been held in aid stations awaiting hospital facilities arrived; occasional victims of guerilla snipers were brought in; an increasing number of cases of pneumonia, tonsillitis, and jaundice were seen; and the ever-present menace of dysentery began to manifest itself. The majority of new surgical cases were victims of traffic accidents.

A man from the receiving ward was constantly on the prowl through the wards trying to find a few empty spaces on the floors where new patients could be put. Pfc. Ben Tanner frequently had to use considerable tact and diplomacy and sometimes a little force in persuading ambulance drivers to leave without proper blanket exchange. Some of the drivers insisted on opening up each blanket and inspecting it minutely, and always shunned the gray, sometimes ragged French ones. At some time during the first day or two, Lt. Crosby Alley pridefully returned to the area driving an ambulance. This was the only available transportation for the entire unit until the equipment arrived. His answer to curious queries regarding its source was "I 'promoted' it."

One of the more unpleasant situations which the 77th inherited at the Civil Hospital was the morgue which contained seven or eight bodies in varying stages of decay and dissolution. Several of them had been taken from the harbor and were bloated beyond recognition. One of them was only a charred skeleton. On the second day, Capt. Tom Hamilton, the pathologist in charge of the laboratory and pharmacy section, was advised of this situation by the French authorities of the hospital. The detachment commander assigned a sanitation detail to remove the bodies to a cemetery, but these individuals took a quick look through the door and retreated—mission unfulfilled. The following morning the little French superintendent was waiting at the gate for Capt. Hamilton and, with many gesticulations, explained that the odor around the morgue had not been remedied. Capt. Hamilton promised that something would be done about it immediately, and the Graves Registration Service was called. The detail of

soldiers which was sent out remained only long enough to peek in through the door at the sight, then took to their heels, and the situation remained unchanged for another day. The next morning, as Capt. Hamilton was eluding the now hysterical superintendent, Pvt. Robert Carey, of the laboratory section came weaving in. Resplendent after a twenty-franc haircut, shave, shampoo and much cologne, Carey had been sampling his purchases of several bottles of wine and was in a very jovial mood. Having heard something of the predicament, Carey and Broadway Jones assembled several other comrades of the morning's activities and, before the detachment commander could reprimand any of them for drinking, volunteered to take care of the morgue situation. The revolting task was probably accomplished with more alacrity than dignity, but these men earned the undying gratitude of the harassed Capt. Hamilton.

Lt. Crosby Alley, the mess officer, encountered considerable difficulty in securing food and for over a month C-ration and British rations were all that could be obtained. The mess personnel shared the large dirty kitchen with French sisters and civilians who were preparing food for their own patients in the other buildings. The kitchen building itself contained several rooms but only one was used by the 77th. The remaining rooms consisted of a bread room, vegetable rooms, refrigerator room, lavatory, offices, and living quarters for the French. Since field ranges were not to be used inside a closed building, cooking was done in large steam boilers, a few hot plates and several slow-heating electric ovens. Doors at each end of the room served as an entrance and exit for the chow line. There were no mess halls, and everyone stood or sat on the ground outside while eating. Messkits were inadequately washed in the gummy salt water and as a result many cases of diarrhea occurred. Windows were not screened and flies were a sanitary problem. Water for drinking was hauled by horse and cart from a well outside the area and then chlorinated.

Having mastered the art of opening and eating C-rations the patients and personnel graduated into the British fourteen-in-one class. This was an English emergency ration packed in a single box and intended for feeding fourteen men for one day. All its contents were canned goods consisting of beef and kidney stew, salmon, potatoes, mixed vegetables, varied suet puddings, a little fruit, margarine, jam, biscuits, premixed tea, cigarettes, hard candy and chocolate bars. All this was viewed and eaten with much distaste and "griping," but no manner of cooking or combination could disguise the unpalatable food. Compared with the meager and unsavory repast of the French, it could be considered good. Huge steaming boilers of strong smelling horse meat, blood-sausage, weed-like varieties of vegetables, weak soup and dark French bread, were seen in the kitchen as the black-robed nuns cooked for the native patients.

Eventually some American food started coming in, but it also had various shortcomings. One day a few steaks were obtained from one of the ships in the harbor, but this small taste of fresh meat only lead to the desire for more. Dehydrated eggs, potatoes, carrots, cabbage, beets, huge quantities of salmon, hash, stew, corned beef, spam, vienna sausages, paraffin-like canned butter, and C-biscuits were among the many food items in type B ration. Inexperience in cooking dehydrated vegetables resulted in many

sorry messes, but eventually the technic was perfected and variety in the method of preparation helped alleviate the monotony of the food.

On the second day, Brig. Gen. Teddy Roosevelt came to the hospital with a captain and master sergeant. As he limped through the wards, his combat suit still showing the dirt of battle, he called many of the patients by name and several by their first names. With a "H'ya doin', Joe?", the gruff-voiced sergeant passed out cigarettes, matches, razors and blades to the First Division soldiers. Frequently, the General stopped to chat with one of his "boys," and they exchanged information about just what had happened when that machine gun had cut loose on the platoon. Seeing a general in grimy combat clothes walking along in muddy GI shoes was an entirely new ex-



A COMPARATIVELY CLEAN ARAB CITIZEN

perience for the 77th and to have shouted "Attention!" as he entered the ward would probably have been considered a discourtesy, even if someone had remembered to do it. After he had gone, one patient pointed a bandaged arm after him, and with a lump in his throat, vowed, "There's a man I'd follow through hell." During this time the captain was jotting down all the names on a scrap of paper. A few days later Brig. Gen. Terry Allen came through the hospital and awarded the Purple Heart to all the wounded First Division men.

The hospital's organizational equipment had been shipped from Liverpool on a freighter, and although the ship had arrived at Oran shortly after the personnel, it had been sent to Arzew some forty kilometers (twenty-five miles) east of Oran, then finally back to Mers el Kebir. The dock facilities of all the available ports in this area had been damaged during the landing operations, and many of the harbors, like Oran, had been blocked by

sunken ships. Pressed now with the necessity of unloading food, ammunition, and other such critical supplies to sustain the forces which had already landed, together with getting ashore the necessary service troops such as quartermaster, ordnance, engineer, and signal corps, the overworked port battalions were accomplishing their part of the supply miracle each day. The first of the 77th equipment was not available until five days after the work in the two hospitals had begun. The unit's vehicles, consisting of five trucks, two jeeps and two 350-gallon water trailers, under the charge of Pfc. Rupert Collins, were on another freighter which arrived at Oran at about the same time as the ship containing the equipment.

After considerable difficulty, the two ships were located, and as soon as the vehicles were unloaded, equipment was taken off the other ship as rapidly as possible and hauled into town. During the process of unloading, one of the water trailers was "spirited away" by another hospital unit but was later located and returned. Some dilapidated French trucks were also used to haul equipment. Arabs at the docks, assisting in loading and unloading, had a field day as they managed to carry off many articles in their voluminous robes and baggy trousers. The crates and boxes containing urgently needed supplies were unloaded at the Civil Hospital, and the other material was stored in part of the bakery building. Boxes were opened on the sidewalks in front of the buildings, and in the hallways; nurses, doctors, and ward men thankfully carried in the necessary and much needed articles.

With the arrival of U.S. army cots, blankets, and other ward equipment, the steel beds, dirty mattresses, and blankets were removed and replaced by these new and clean items. Enamel bedpans and urinals took the place of helmets and empty plasma cans, and drinking cups released the C-ration cans for use as ash trays. Mops and brooms were now available, and the interior of the buildings were thoroughly cleaned and scrubbed. Windows were washed, sidewalks and streets cleared of rubbish, and the entire hospital soon began to take on a new appearance. With the acquisition of wash basins and towels, the patients could be properly bathed and shaved, and never was soap more joyously received. One or two boxes of pajamas had been found among the incoming equipment, and these supplemented the few hospital gowns which had been borrowed from the French. A few clean, white sheets added to the patients' comfort.

The native staff of the Civil Hospital continued to care for their patients in the other pavilions, and in the streets of the hospital grounds, the ambulatory French and Arab patients walked about picking up cigarette stubs and asking for food or candy. The American doctors frequently stopped a patient in the street to get a better look at cases of tropical diseases which they had never seen before. Small, malnourished children ran about with their swollen bellies only partially covered by a shirt. Many of these children appeared to have chronic malaria, kala azar, or tropical sprue, and many cases of advanced trachoma were observed. The maternity ward always seemed to be overflowing into the streets. One evening in broad daylight, the air raid siren sounded, and an Arab patient, completely naked, darted from one of the wards and ran the length of the main hospital street to a shelter.

On the evening of November 22, the harbor area and city were attacked by the Luftwaffe. Having had little

actual experience with air raids, most of the 77th personnel ran to the roofs of the buildings in order to see the show. The curtain of tracer shells sent up by the anti-aircraft batteries around the port created quite a spectacle, and it appeared that anybody who had a gun of any kind was wildly shooting into the air. Several fifty-calibre machine guns in the vicinity of the hospital opened up with a clatter that sent several of the spell-bound spectators scurrying for the lower floors of the building. Only a few bombs were dropped into the harbor, and a negligible amount of damage was done.

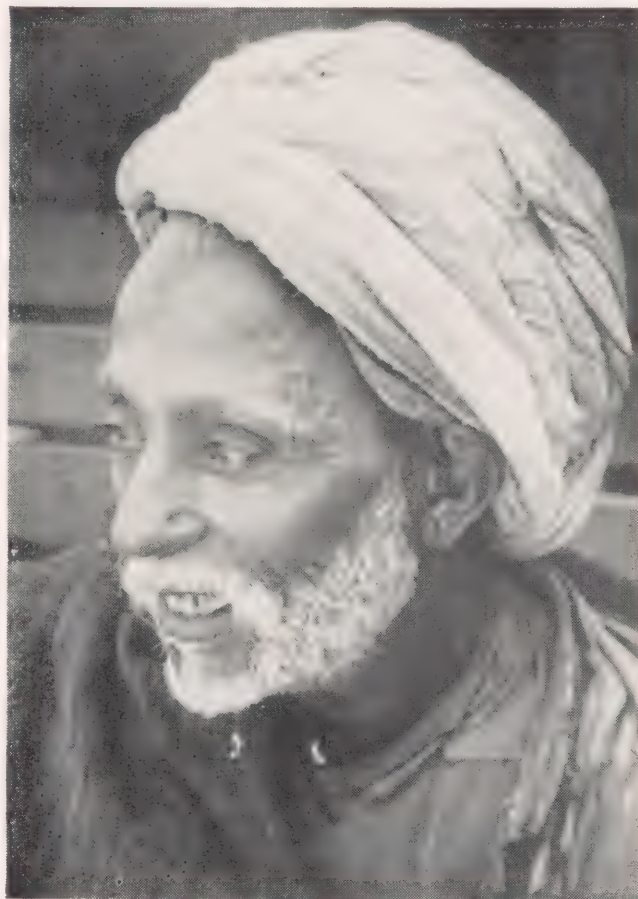
Several French women of the city, members of the French Red Cross, had offered their services, and had been assigned duties in the wards. One attractive young French girl, Yvette, worked on one of the medical wards. Her parents had asked that she be escorted home each evening by one of the American soldiers, and as soon as this fact became known to the enlisted men, an unappointed detail, about the size of a company, was waiting each night to walk with Yvette to her home.

The orientation lectures given on the ships en route to Africa, and the material set forth in the "*Guide Book to North Africa*" had given everyone a fairly definite idea of what to expect from the people and their surroundings. The statement that the water was universally non-potable, and that wine was used instead of water for drinking purposes had made a rather firm impression, especially when tempered with the lecturer's remarks that of course the wine was not intoxicating. Consequently, shortly after landing, two large hogs-heads of wine were purchased and made available to everybody. After the first few sips of this wine, however, there were many who strongly doubted the allusions to its lack of alcoholic content, and the antics of a few who were not accustomed to drinking, after they had quaffed one or two canteen-cups of the deep red liquid, convinced the others that one could easily become intoxicated from this water-substitute.

Several of the lecturers had stressed the sensitive nature and cleanliness of the Arab, and his strict observance of the mandates of the Mohammedan religion. According to the guide book, one should not attempt to take pictures of the Arabs because of their superstition of the "Evil eye," one should not offer them tobacco since they considered it base to smoke; and above all, in any dealing with them, one should be extremely careful not to offend their sensitive natures by any act which might remotely resemble violence. Perhaps the authors of the booklet had never been to Oran, for there seemed to be considerable discrepancy between the information in the booklet and the actual contact with the people. A cigarette thrown to a group of Arabs on the street usually resulted in a free-for-all scuffle involving all of them from three to seventy years of age. When a camera was produced, Arabs jostled each other in order to get in the picture. Threatening them with fist, knife, or gun when they crowded too closely, begging for food or cigarettes usually brought only a momentary withdrawal of a few feet until they were back again. The worst of all sins against an Arab was to gaze on an unveiled woman's face. This, of course, only whetted the enthusiasm of the candid camera experts, but they soon found that for two cigarettes an Arab would permit photos to be taken of all his women.

The officers and men usually made the walk between the bakery building and the Civil Hospital before full

daylight or after dark, and on the back streets anything could happen. The sound of shuffling bare feet as the natives crept along through the dim light, the muttered words of a strange tongue, and the malevolent appearance of the pock-marked faces of some of the Arabs were all factors which caused a man to loiter at the gate until a buddy came along rather than start out alone. Nearly every day, a market was held in an open square near the hospital, and here one could barter for oranges, tangerines, eggs, a donkey, or a roasted goat's head. Articles of clothing, especially shoes, were more valuable than money, and in fact these articles could be sold for many times their value for cash. A sheet, a mattress cover, or similar article



HEADGEAR WORN BY ARAB MEN

would frequently bring as much as five hundred francs. (at this time a franc was equal to one and one-half cents in American money). Beggars in tattered rags, frequently blind, chanted their pleas for alms in a sing-song monotone. Everywhere on the streets between dawn and dark small boys rapped soldiers on the leg with a brush, and holding out their boxes of paraphernalia, cried, "Shoo-shine, Johnnie? 'Merican polish."

In the business district of the city, the shops and stores were besieged by nurses, officers, and men for perfume, Arab bracelets, rings, ear bobs, and other assorted jewelry, much of which proved to be of the ten-cent store variety. Grass shoes with wooden or woven grass soles, leather goods of all types, and packages of water-softener were other items of purchase. The French women of the city

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were almost universally attractive in appearance and well dressed; some of them even beautiful. The sidewalk cafes became immediately popular, and were usually crowded with soldiers enjoying a glass of wine and seeing the sights of the town. Except in the better cafes, wine was called "Veeno" by most of the soldiers, but soon many of them



SHOE SHINE BOYS

were ordering *vin rose*, *vin rouge*, or *vin blanc* like old connoisseurs. When the 77th first came to Oran, good champagne could be purchased readily for fifty francs a bottle, but after two weeks the price had risen to five hundred francs, and after six weeks, an inferior grade cost one thousand francs a bottle providing it could be found at all.

On November 21, word came from the Second Corps Surgeon's office that a station hospital would soon arrive to take over the Civil Hospital, and that the 77th was to move into tents. A site was chosen about three and one-half miles from the hospital in a flat field south of the city, and a small advance detail was sent out to the new area. Sgt. Arthur Zimmers and Pvt. R. J. England were left as guards, and remained on their post for twenty-four hours without food or relief. During the next few days, the unit equipment, much of which was still stock-piled on the docks, was taken to the new area as rapidly as the few trucks could haul it. Another detail of about one hundred men marched out to the area, pitched their pup tents, and set to work erecting the tent city.

On November 24, the personnel of the 7th Station Hospital arrived to take over the Civil Hospital. By this time, the place had been cleaned, and nearly every department was running fairly smoothly. The 77th members, now eating three times a day and enjoying a few hours off duty occasionally, surveyed their accomplishments with considerable pride and felt that in twelve days they had made a remarkable change in things. It was with a certain

amount of indignation that they heard their efforts being belittled by these rookies, fresh from the States. Within a few days, as the 7th's equipment began to come in, and mahogany desks were moved in to replace the packing box furniture, the tension increased, and nearly everyone in the 77th was anxious to move to the tent city which, viewed from the top of the building, was rapidly taking shape in the flat fields outside of the city. In view of these circumstances it is not surprising that there was little reluctance expressed when the main body of the 77th moved out into the tents on December 1.

The surgery nurses, a few technicians and ward men remained for two or three days to assist the 7th until all their supplies arrived. Their personnel was somewhat alarmed by the small array of working equipment, and did not think it was possible to function under such conditions. The sterilizer was promptly taken over by them and improper operation and neglect caused it to blow up, resulting in rather extensive destruction of that section of the building. Several members of both units narrowly escaped serious injury.

The field selected for the hospital had been the site of a vineyard, and when the vines had been uprooted, rows of holes were left in the ground which varied from a few inches to two feet in depth. At the time the advance detail first moved into the area, the ground was hard and dry, but it became dusty as soon as tramping feet stirred up the surface. The fall rains, which began on November 25, made a red sea of mud on the entire area and the holes were filled with water and slushy red mud. This situation became rather treacherous, since wading through what appeared to be a shallow puddle sometimes resulted in going in up to the knee. Between the downpours, when the rain slacked off to a drizzle, the men waded around in the



ORAN STREET SCENES

red gumbo and set up the tents. Several times the officer in charge of these operations would be dissatisfied because the tents were not lined up perfectly, and they would have to be torn down and set up again. During the first few days of life in the mud all the personnel were quartered in ward tents. The enlisted men were assembled one night as darkness fell and told to move into pup tents immediately. They were further instructed that the maneuver would be done strictly by-the-numbers, and that no flashlights or fires would be permitted. Lined up by platoons, they were given no choice of tent-mates, and many buddies were

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separated in the process. Slogging about in the mud, the tents were finally pitched, and by an hour or so after midnight they were ready to spread their blankets in the mud and go to bed. A few of the more fortunate ones had mattress covers filled with straw between their blankets and the mud. The following morning, reveille came as usual and the men went back to the work of unpacking the equipment and setting up the tents. British anti-gas capes (much like a "slicker" type raincoat) had been issued to the men in England, and these were used to cover the open end of their pup tents. The fact that the gas capes became somewhat muddy seemed to irritate somebody, and orders were issued to turn in all gas capes to the supply department.

Some of the men had brought woven grass mats from the Civil Hospital and were using them as a mattress, but the gesticulating superintendent suddenly appeared one day with an interpreter and demanded that the mats be returned. A few of the men had purchased grass mats at the market, but not being able to produce a bill of sale, these, along with the others, went into the pile to placate the superintendent.

The soft red mud would not hold the small pup tent pegs, and many of the tents blew down in the squalls that swept across the area several times a day. After a few days and nights of this life in a cold hog-wallow, the general morale of the men fell to an extremely low level, yet



they continued to do their work each day and returned to their wet blankets at night. When the sun came out for a few hours, its warmth dried the clothes the men were wearing, and those who could get away from their work long enough knocked down their pup tents in order to dry their personal belongings and blankets. Usually a sudden storm would send them scurrying back to protect what they had gained from the sunshine. After a week or ten days in the mud, the supply department brought in some straw so that everyone had an opportunity to separate his bed from the mud. After a time, the black-out regulations were ignored and fires were permitted at night. This added immeasurably to the comfort of the men and at least allowed them to dry out their shoes and go to bed dry.

The horrible mud of Oran became famous to nearly all troops in the African Theater, and even inspired the pup tent poets. The following bit in iambic tetrameter, written by A. Mudder, appeared later in the *Stars and Stripes*:

MUD, MUD, MUD!

I've seen mud on U. S. race tracks
That stopped the horses near the wire;
I've seen mud on Flander's Poppies
That stopped soldiers under fire;
I've seen mud in some U. S. camps
That would flatten beast or man;
But I've never seen the brand of mud
That's found in old Oran.

Now the mud in Oran's pastures
Is a sticky, clinging lump;
It goes above your ankles
And it may contact your rump.
Gee, how the damn stuff gets you,
How it clings to shoe and boot;
How it soaks your gosh darned breeches,
How it messes up your suit.

You get mud in every chow plate,
You get mud in bed, in seems;
You get mud in your best helmet,
You get mud in your best dreams;
Sure, I know that this is wartime,
Sure, I know it's sweat and blood;
But good Lord, now must I perish
In this damned red Oran mud?

Men became known by the mud they wore, and when a transient came into camp wearing gray mud on his shoes and clothing, he was immediately marked as a stranger from the combat zone in eastern Algeria or Tunisia.

A few of the enlisted men who had special jobs were allowed to sleep in the hospital tents. The first three grades of non-commissioned officers were given pyramidal tents for quarters and cots or litters for beds. This contrast proved very irritating to the other men, and recalled the British method of segregation used on board the *Orcades*.

Small wall tents were erected for the officers and nurses. And their areas were separated by the mess hall which consisted of two ward tents pitched end to end with the kitchen under a fly between the two. Each area was made up of two rows of small wall tents facing a central "street." Two persons occupied one tent. They were living in what would

ordinarily be considered very rugged conditions, but compared with the enlisted men they were in the lap of luxury. Water for bathing, shaving and laundry, which was all done in a steel helmet, could be obtained from the mess area. The water was heated in thirty-two gallon GI cans over an open wood fire.

This area, like the enlisted men's, was somewhat lower than the portion occupied by the hospital, so that drainage was a real problem. Ditches were dug in all directions, and several enterprising firms of hydraulic engineers developed among the officers. Armed with a few shovels, they tackled the problem from a "scientific" point of view and soon had water flowing uphill, and around the area through a maze of inter-connected canals. The tent occupied by Lt. Col. Weaver finally had to be abandoned when his cot sank deep into the mire and threatened to disappear.

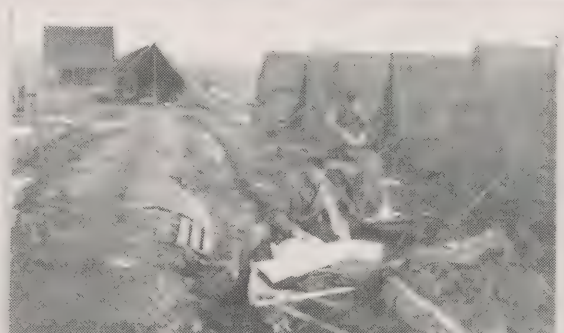
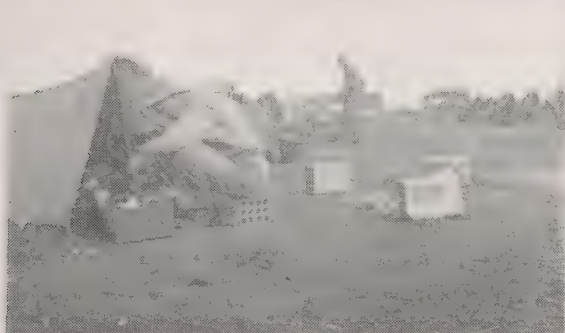
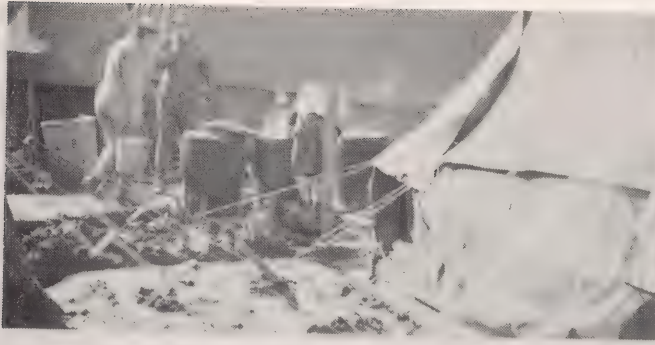
The mess hall between the nurses' and officers' area was furnished with folding steel chairs and unfinished wooden tables. The nurses ate in one of the tents and the officers in the other, everyone entering at the kitchen entrance. One night, during a bad storm, the fly was blown loose. Pots, pans, spoons, plates, and cups went flying all over the area. One of the loose ropes of the fly dropped into a huge pan of gravy, and with each gust of wind it was flipped about in the air, scattering the greasy mess over all the surrounding territory.

At the time the main body of the unit moved out to the tents from the city, ten members of the unit were ill and needed to be in the hospital. The first ward tent erected served as a hospital for them, and one nurse, two officers, and six enlisted men were put into the same tent, improvised canvas partitions serving as "walls of Jericho." As other tents were erected, the receiving department was opened and the unit began to practice its first "medicine under canvas."

The hospital acted in the capacity of a station hospital for the troops in the area, and the census gradually increased as the admissions exceeded the number of patients returned to duty. On December 14, a hospital ship from Algiers brought 233 patients, and on December 21, the British trooper *Stratallan* was hit by a torpedo as she approached Oran harbor and 151 patients were received from this calamity. A large percentage of these patients were British paratroopers and many of them had fractured ankles or legs when they jumped from the deck of the troop ship down to the deck of the destroyer or to life rafts. Many remarks of questionable humor were made by the other patients about paratroopers who incurred so many injuries from such a short jump. Some of the patients had been in the water before they were picked up, and were covered with oil. This resulted in a large number of infections of the skin and scalp. One man had been a patient in the ship's sick bay in his fourth day of treatment for meningococcic meningitis. He made an uneventful recovery despite the exposure coincident with his rescue.

About twenty of the patients from the hospital ship were psychiatric cases, and this was the first experience with mental casualties of the war. These patients rapidly became acquainted with one another in a jovial sort of way and soon the entire camp was hearing of the pranksters in ward 21. The occupants of this unusual ward placed a sign in front of the tent telling the world that this was the "Nut House," and within a few days were printing a paper, "*The*

MEDICINE UNDER CANVAS



Nut House Gazette." This publication, laboriously hand printed on bond size paper, developed such wide popularity around the camp that its total circulation of four or five copies was passed about from hand to hand until everyone had had an opportunity to read it. On its two pages were news flashes, always cleverly written, of the doings of the ward occupants, all the personnel, and the other patients in the hospital. Everyone in camp served as a reporter, and dropped in any time of day to give them any gossip or newsy tidbit he had picked up. Personal matters were frequently flaunted in headlines, and an opportunity to deride an officer was never missed. The editorial efforts were interrupted several times a day when a plane from the nearby La Senia airport "buzzed" the hospital. This procedure always produced a marked relapse of their symptoms and in a fit of shaking, each man dived for cover under his cot. This really was rather a pathetic sight, and several hours time and a large amount of sedative were required to restore order.

The equipment which had been issued to the unit in England had been rapidly crated and loaded for shipping; and the men who were to use it had never had the opportunity of seeing it until the unpacking process began. Now it was discovered that a large amount of the tentage and other equipment was of 1918 vintage, left-overs of the First World War. As the packing cases were opened, the contents were frequently found to be wrapped in newspapers of 1918, depicting the fortunes of another war, and one was found with the blazing headline "ARMISTICE." Many of the tents had become weakened by age and former use, and some of them lacked enough rope to permit their proper erection. The material in some was so rotten that they tore easily, and almost all of them developed several leaks the first time they became wet. One item which soon proved its value to everyone who became acquainted with it was the pot-bellied Sibley stove. Designed to burn either wood or coal, these stoves can be easily erected in a few minutes; several lengths of stove pipe pass through an opening in the tent roof. This latter arrangement proved to be responsible for many headaches and considerable damage to the tentage. The ancient tents had no prefabricated openings in the roofs for the stove pipe outlet, and it was necessary to rip open a seam to make way for the pipe. The fallacy of this improvisation soon made itself evident, however, when the pipes became hot and the tents began to catch fire. Gallon-sized tin cans with the ends removed were inserted in the rent around the pipes to serve as guards, and although this was not entirely satisfactory, there was no better substitute available. When the cans became sufficiently hot or slipped out of position, the tent caught fire with little delay. Before the absolute necessity of spark arresters atop the pipes was realized, many stoves were erected without them, and the sparks from the wood fires burned holes in many of the tents. The fire department was called upon nearly every day, Fire Marshal Sgt. William Hagan and his utilities crew put out the fires, and returned later to patch the damaged tent.

Since this was the first time the unit had ever attempted to set up in tents, and no definite ground plans had been devised, the original arrangement conformed largely to the recommended style in the army manuals. As this plan proved inconvenient in many respects, tents had to be taken down and put up again in another location. Since much of the equipment had been manufactured for World War

I, it no longer could be used in conjunction with other implements of more recent vintage. The autoclaves for the operating room were fitted with gasoline burners which had been made to burn the low octane gasoline of 1918. These could not be satisfactorily operated on the high octane, leaded gas of the present era, and the burner tips became clogged, corroded, or burned out within a very short time. Steel cabinets had been provided for the wards for medicines and linens, but proved to be too large and cumbersome for practical use in the field. The surgical instruments, however, which were all new and of recent design, proved quite satisfactory. They had been packed in cosmoline, a heavy, sticky grease for protection against rust, and only after repeated washings in gasoline were they clean. The x-ray apparatus was new and up-to-date and, for the most part, was complete. The shock-proof cables were missing and without these the machines could not be used. No provisions had been made for dark rooms for developing film or for fluoroscopy. Under the guidance of Capt. John F. Bowser and S/Sgt. Orman Cook these deficiencies were corrected, the entire electrical system of the department was rewired, and improvised dark rooms constructed. When these reparations had been improved and perfected nothing essential was lacking, and the system was later adopted as standard equipment by the U.S. Army Medical Department. The two gasoline-operated generators for the x-ray department were in need of constant attention, the block of one having been cracked in transit; it was through the untiring efforts of Pvt. John Gulleddge and Pvt. Edwin Parker that these generators were kept in running order until more permanent repairs could be made.

No ditches had been dug around the tents when they were first put up, and the first rains had sent rivulets running across the red mud floors; other tents had been pitched after the ground had become thoroughly soaked. The floors of all the tents were now a sticky mess, and a number of experimental types of flooring were tried. Tarpaulins were used in a few tents but proved unsuitable because of the ease with which they became dirty and the difficulty of cleaning them. Mixtures of sand, gravel, and clay were tried and found wanting. Wooden platforms were constructed for the dental clinic, but were too cumbersome for ease of transportation. Sand was used in the operating room, and when this was found unsatisfactory a heavy coating of oil was applied but failed to improve the situation. Heavy gravel or crushed rock was finally judged to be the best all-round material.

It is difficult to visualize the trouble and confusion experienced at this time, when so much of the equipment was found to be old and of little value or in need of extensive repair. Attendant upon this trouble was the expected dilemma of setting up a hospital in the field for the first time. The numerous revisions and changes which were necessary added to the amount of work that had to be done. It was largely a case of attempting to do everything "by the manual" and finding that in many instances the manual was outdated and not applicable to the present situations.

The first operating theater was set up in one ward tent; two operating tables and their accompanying paraphernalia occupied the front two-thirds of the tent, and the rear one-third was used for the application of plaster casts. This arrangement was entirely too crowded to permit effi-

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cient work when a large number of cases had to be handled. Surgery department headquarters, the surgical supply section, and the sterilizing system were all crowded into another ward tent, while a third one contained the shock de-

partment, the dental clinic, and a minor-surgery operating room.

There was considerable variation in the arrangement of the cots and other equipment in the wards, due to the fact



MORE VIEWS OF AFRICA

that changes were frequently made in an attempt to find the most convenient floor plan. Space had to be left at one end of the ward for the nurse's desk and medicine cabinet (this cabinet also served as a storage cupboard for the enamel cups, plates, silverware, and the clean linen). The stove and wood pile occupied an area toward the center of the tent, and a variously arranged assortment of urinals, bed pans, enema cans, and other such articles were lying in the mud in one of the rear corners or partially hidden in a C-ration box. It was imperative that a center aisle be left so that a litter could be carried in and out of the ward, and the only arrangement which seemed to fit all the desired conditions was a side to side placement of the cots in a row on each side of the tent, leaving out a cot or two where necessary. When enough space was left between the cots to permit a person to walk between them easily, eighteen cots filled the tents; with twenty cots in each tent, they were separated by only six inches.

Wood for the stoves was supplied by the quartermaster corps and was, for the most part, logs and twisted stumps of orange, olive, and eucalyptus, probably three of the hardest woods known. The number of tools for wood cutting was entirely inadequate, and it was very difficult to obtain others.

A unit of army engineers had laid out the roads of the camp with graders, and although they had crowned the roads and left ditches at the sides, they had obviously underestimated the magnitude of the rains in this section of coastal Africa. With the first downpours, culverts proved

The procedure of evacuating patients from the hospital was carried out according to the manual. An evacuation ward under the supervision of Capt. John Tucker was established and patients who were ready to be transferred to another hospital or returned to duty were sent to this ward. This meant a disruption of the doctor-patient relationship considered so essential by all the professional personnel, since many of the patients awaiting evacuation still required medical attention. This process also meant extra handling of patients by the litter bearers who were already overworked. It was evident that if anything like a mass evacuation became necessary, the system would col-



WHAT ARE THESE, NATIVES OR NURSES?

lapse. Sgt. Robert J. Gerlach, of the evacuation department, began to develop plans for some other system, and when the day came for the transfer of a large number of patients, he was ready. The new system was anything but satisfactory, however, and resulted in considerable unnecessary delay and confusion. The 222 patients which were evacuated on this day were sent to three different places, depending on the nature of their illness or injuries, and the task of finding each patient, getting him into the correct ambulance, and keeping the necessary records was fraught with so many problems that a revision of the plan was imperative.

The food had shown little improvement over the latter part of the stay at the Civil Hospital. It still consisted mainly of dehydrated eggs, vegetables, canned meat, and C-rations. However, after the short starvation period of the first few days in Africa, any food at all was appreciated.

Living in the mud as they were, the appearance of the ward personnel was none too neat. The nurses had acquired one-piece coverall fatigues, field jackets, and GI brogan shoes, almost universally too large; the resulting picture brought to mind almost anything but the term "angel of mercy." Ingenious drop-seat arrangements were constructed into some of the unionalls to avoid the almost complete disrobing in the cold rain which would have otherwise been required.

A water pipe was laid into the area to supply water for washing the mess equipment. An improvised shower head was also set up at the end of the pipe, but the water was so cold that no attempt was ever made to use it. About one-half mile from camp was a railway round house which had a bath house. Arrangements were made so that the 77th personnel could get a shower or tub bath at a certain hour each day. The facilities for heating the water were somewhat limited, so that only the first group had hot water. A



NOTE SIGN IN PICTURE, "NO ENTRY"

entirely too small, ditches overflowed, and the water backed up into several of the wards, necessitating a removal of the patients to wards on higher ground.

In spite of the red ooze on top of the ground, the earth beneath this upper layer was dry and hard. When latrines were dug, the ground was so hard that it was necessary to call out the engineers with their pneumatic drills. The edges of the holes caved off easily and added another obstacle to the difficulties of maintaining adequate latrines.

certain few, however, soon discovered that in off hours the Arab attendant would gladly allow prolonged hot showers for a small token such as a few cigarettes or a piece of chocolate. Later, a quartermaster shower unit was set up in Oran and the men were taken into town by truck. This was the first chance for a real shower for many of them.

Because of the rain, mud, cold weather, and trying circumstances associated with operating a hospital in the field, the amount of work required to maintain the high professional standards of the organization was greatly increased. The bathing, feeding, and other care of the patients was in itself a full time job, and the wood chopping, fire building, and water carrying were some of the innumerable extra chores that made it necessary for more strenuous activity and usually several hours extra work each day. The patients were frequently surprised that it was possible to obtain such excellent treatment and care under the prevailing crude conditions.

In addition to operating a hospital, the 77th at this time served as a welcoming and housing station for all the incoming medical personnel and units in the area. S/Sgt. Henry Smith, S/Sgt. Nelson Ziesemer, and 1st/Sgt. Alvin E. Kendall constituted the welcoming committee, accompanied by one of the officers. The few trucks of the unit were taken to the docks at Mers el Kebir and the luggage, barracks bags, and packs were loaded on and brought to the area. The nurses, and occasionally some of the officers, were also transported. As the sergeants led the men of the incoming units over the same route the 77th men had traversed into Oran they always paused just outside the dock area within view of the tunneled mountain. Here they described how they had led a team of litter bearers, four surgical technicians, and one headquarters clerk up over the side of the mountain to the summit where they struck such fear into the hearts of the enemy that the surrender of Oran was but a matter of moments. In addition, a detailed description of the trek to be made over the mountain was given, to add to the discomfort of the incoming rookies.

Still chafing under the treatment received at the hands of the 7th Station Hospital, the 77th personnel were not inclined to treat their guests any too graciously. The enlisted men still remembered the 7th Station men with their cots, low cut shoes, and borrowing manners, and the officers and nurses couldn't forget the insults hurled at them about the sloppy condition of the hospital and its equipment as they watched the mahogany desks and other splendid fixtures roll in. The incoming units were quartered in ward tents, but frequently there were not enough of these available and some of the men had to pitch their pup tents in the mud. Tired from the long walk, unhappy with their prospect of a muddy wet area to stop in, the C ration meals in the rain, and the damp beds, they were not inclined to convey any form of gratitude to the 77th. At times they complained bitterly about conditions which were far better than the 77th had encountered on their own introduction to Africa. One morning as the 77th men were going to breakfast, one of the dining tents collapsed on a group of the guests who were sleeping there. The men in the chow line derived considerable amusement from this occurrence, and hurled wise cracks and taunts at the unfortunate people trying to scramble out from under the fallen tent.

Passes were granted to Oran, where an American Red Cross Club had been opened for enlisted men. The French

restaurants also came in for quite a lucrative business from the troops stationed in the area. A number of the officers and nurses frequently spent an evening at the *Chantilly Club* or the *Coq d'Or*. On one occasion, forty-two officers and nurses made the four mile trip into town packed into one truck. An MP was watching as they arrived in town and started getting out of the truck, when more than double the usual load for this size truck had climbed out and they still kept coming, the MP walked off with a somewhat dazed expression on his face.

During their spare time, the men had ample opportunity to barter with the many Arabs who came to the outskirts



A FAMILIAR SITE ON THE OUTSKIRTS OF CAMP

of camp with knives, eggs, oranges, tangerines, jewelry, and wine. One of the Arabs became a daily visitor. He would take orders for any desired article and deliver it the following day. Rarely would he return without the order filled. He could supply several types of wine until it was discovered that he poured sour wine, sweet wine, and several other types from the same bottle. When he was accosted about this matter he professed that he could not understand anything that was being said.

Christmas Eve was preceded by several days of hard rain and cold weather, and there was very little to help make a celebration that would resemble a true Christmas. Capt. Tucker bought a tree and enough trinkets to trim it and entertained quite a number of guests in the evacuation department. An abundance of wine in some quarters helped considerably in creating a holiday mood. Others were more thoughtful of the true meaning of the day; church services were held and several groups went through the wards singing Christmas carols. On Christmas Day, the officers took advantage of the fair weather and turned out en masse to construct a much needed road down the center of their area.

This was the first Christmas away from the States for nearly everyone, and the first Christmas away from home for many, and as the difficulties and disappointments of the previous six weeks welled up within them, it burst forth in the most profound homesickness they had ever experienced. No amount of joking, wisecracking, singing, praying, or drinking could abolish entirely the pall of depression which was in the heart of everyone. Christmas dinner, like so many other meals, consisted of vienna sausages, peas, tea, and crackers. The fancy menus which the army had announced would be served to every American soldier, no matter where he was, were recalled with a bitterness which only served to accentuate the nostalgia and make these people feel that even the army had forgotten

them. This feeling was even worse for those few who knew that a shipload of turkeys and all the "trimmin's" had arrived in Oran harbor but had not been unloaded because of the shortage of dock facilities. One man was heard to remark, "They should have sent ducks—they could have swum right on into camp."

On one of the wards, the patients were mixed British and American. Some of them had managed to get out to the edge of camp and procure some wine which was secretly passed about the ward. A heated argument developed after the bottle had gone around several times, and the relative merits of the British and American armies were cussed and discussed at considerable length. Finally, a jovial mood was reached and a unanimous decision that both were good armies was expressed. Quiet came over the ward, as inter-allied relations became cemented and the soldiers went off to sleep.

Numerous private parties and feasts took place over the entire area, with dinners of eggs, chickens, guineas, and other fowl cooked over open fires or on the tent stoves. One of these parties was held by the enlisted men in the headquarters tent, and when a captain walked in too late for the party, he was offered a choice of about four or five different kinds of fowl necks.

The miserable atmosphere and meager fare at Christmas was largely compensated by the food which was served on New Year's Day. Roast turkey, dressing, giblet gravy, cranberry sauce, fresh potatoes, crisp celery, hot apple pie, white bread, and coffee were served in generous proportions. For the first time in Africa, the head cook stuck his head into the mess hall at frequent intervals and called, "Seconds on everything." Every person in the camp had all he could eat that day.

Shortly after New Year's Day, 1943, as the number of patients decreased and there was no apparent prospect for any large number of admissions, the men were finally moved out of the wallow where they had been living into some of the empty ward tents. As the old area was policed, many of the pup tents were found to have rotted under the piles of mud heaped up along their edges. The mattress covers were so mildewed and foul smelling that many of the men threw them in the fire. The added accumulation of half-rotten straw, sharply accentuated the miserable conditions under which these men had been living.

A recreation tent for the men was greatly improved by the addition of a five-tube German-made radio which they bought in an Oran shop. With this, they were able to hear the news casts over the BBC, and, the weather permitting, a short wave station in the States. Every evening, from the German stations there was a full hour of uninterrupted music of the very latest American recordings; following this, "Sally," an extremely efficient German propagandist with a low, beguiling voice, talked. She spoke of the pleasant life the men had left in the States, saying how silly they were to be so far from home fighting the great Nazi machine. All forms of half-truths were used, and the men enjoyed the program thoroughly, recognizing the element of propaganda and ridiculing the jerries for their clumsy psychological approach.

The officers and nurses used one-half of their mess tent for a recreation hall, and they also had bought a radio. Clustered about the one stove in the tent, they read, played cards, wrote letters, or held up their laundry to dry by the stove. This was the only available heat except on the wards,

and also the only place with electric lights. Several times during the evening the small one and one-half kilowatt generator would cough to a halt and someone would have to fill it with gasoline, clean a spark plug, or make some other minor repair to restore the light. The only other form of recreation was reading by candle-light in the privacy of the small wall tents, usually in bed since this was the only way to keep warm, and everyone of the officers and nurses became more firmly attached to his sleeping bag. At times, candles were scarce and rationed. During this entire period, four-buckle overshoes were worn from the time of arising in the morning until bed time.

Now that the hospital work was occupying so much less time, other means were devised to keep everyone fairly busy. A few periods of close order drill revealed that some of the platoon sergeants and squad leaders had rather vague notions about this phase of military life, and there were those in higher places who felt that this was a crying shame. One road march was made to the La Senia airport, a distance of about two miles from camp. Several truck trips were made to the summit of Santa Cruz mountain, from where one could look down at the harbors and the city.

A large factor in raising the morale about this time was the sudden improvement in the mail situation, for which the troops in the entire area had the 77th men to thank. Very little mail had been received until after Christmas when several large shipments came in at one time. It had been taken from the boats and stacked in piles twenty to thirty feet high, covering hundreds of square feet of floor space. The harried postal men at the A.P.O. were working at top speed, but they were so few in number that their combined efforts had scarcely touched the edges. On learning of the situation, Lt. Leslie B. Williams asked for volunteers from the 77th men and was nearly overrun in the rush. For over a week a truckload of men went to the warehouses, after they had finished their day's work, and sorted mail until midnight or later. As a result of this, the troops all over the theater received their mail much earlier than they would have otherwise, and the 77th were in part compensated for their work by receiving their own mail.



PARTIALLY "STRUCK" CAMP

The military situation in Africa at this time offered little exciting news from the American sector. In Libya, Rommel's "Africa Korps" was being driven back toward Tunisia by Montgomery's Eighth Army. The initial landings had secured the major ports and airfields in North Africa within a period of forty-eight hours. After establishment of the Darlan government, logistic reorganization was

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necessary. The rapid extension of the offensive eastward had been facilitated by the expeditious landing at Algiers and the subsequent French co-operation. The Allied forces had suffered comparatively few casualties in this particu-

lar landing and as quickly as support could be prepared they had been headed toward Tunisia. Difficulties of supply had become so serious that active operations had been practically suspended in early December. Meanwhile the



ORAN ARCHITECTURE

enemy rapidly reinforced his positions which assumed the character of a bridgehead protecting the Bizerte-Tunis area and extending southward to cover the bases into the coastal plain leading to Sousse, Sfax, and Gabes. Medjez-el-Bab remained the key point of the Allied position. The new year had opened with the opposing armies in Tunisia testing each other's strength along the partially stabilized line and matching each other's bids for air supremacy; both forces concentrating against ports and lines of communications.

On January 7, 1943, the unit was alerted for a move, and as the word spread through camp, morale rose rapidly.



PACKED BED ROLLS

There was a general desire to move on for several reasons. Nearly everyone felt that the unit was not performing its intended duty of furnishing medical care to casualties from the front; there was probably a growing wanderlust and a desire to see new places; and living in the mud for nearly six weeks had brought about a universal feeling that any change in environment would be an improvement.

The magnitude of the task of packing the equipment for shipment by boat was not fully realized until the work had started. Many of the original packing cases had been badly broken during shipment or in the process of unpacking, and had to be replaced by new ones sturdy enough to withstand the rough treatment to which they would undoubtedly be subjected at the hands of the dock workers. Lumber was very scarce and that which was available was usually heavy, rough boards of very hard wood. The ingenuity of the men in the utilities department in the construction of the crates and boxes was a tribute to the skill and ability of the American workmen. Nails, hinges, and other necessary articles of hardware were very scarce, and the three carpenters, T/5 Edward T. Scully, Pvt. Lloyd Hartman, and Pvt. Baxter P. Barnhart made many of the boxes with crooked and rusty nails. Only after working long hours each day for over a week was the job finished. Many of the boxes were so large and heavy that when filled, six men were required to lift one of them.

Since it was desirable to get as much of the equipment on the boat as possible, all personnel were moved into ward tents, fed from one mess, and ate from mess kits. This released all the tents and cots of the officers and nurses, their mess tent and its equipment and the mess tents of the men for packing. The housekeeping equipment still in use was to be loaded on the unit's vehicles and carried overland by the advance party.

On about January 10, one officer was detached to the 51st Medical Battalion to travel in their motor convoy as an advance agent to arrange for a bivouac for the main body. The personnel of the unit meanwhile was crowded into a few ward tents, and during the waiting period searched about impatiently for some diversion to occupy the dragging hours. While waiting for travel orders, they received another large shipment of mail, mostly packages, and nearly everyone received more candy, fruit cakes, and canned food than he could eat or pack into his already bulging baggage. Irony in its worst form became evident on many faces as packages from home were opened. The registered delight at finding one of mother's fruit cakes, a jar of olives, or a can of shrimp, frequently faded as further exploration revealed tins of spam, vienna sausage, or corned beef. These latter items, forming about ninety per cent of the meat ration for the African forces, had lost its attractiveness. The few who did not receive any packages were plied with cookies, candy, and all the other delicacies of a box from home, and a package for Joe meant food for all Joe's buddies.

The orders finally arrived, and plans were made to board a train at the Oran Station at 10 o'clock the night of January 14. The heavier luggage, including officers' and nurses' bed rolls, cots, and the barracks bags of the enlisted men, were loaded into freight cars during the day. By evening the hospital area was dotted with numerous small groups of people standing about open fires or dodging into the tents when it rained. Several water cans filled with wine stood about here and there, their contents gradually



AWAITING TRANSPORTATION TO A NEW CAMP

diminishing as canteen cups were dipped full and passed around the group. The holiday mood which had been developing all evening reached its peak as the trucks pulled in to take the group to the station.

As the last of the trucks reached the station about nine o'clock, it was learned that the train had not arrived and would be delayed several hours. With this news, the group began to disperse through the large station, and as the wine wore off, blankets and coats were spread on the concrete floors of the waiting rooms and platforms. A few were able to get several hours rest before the train appeared.

At about three o'clock in the morning, a dinky engine wheezed into the station, steam escaping from all its pores. Behind it rattled a string of battered wooden coaches. Aroused from their slumbers, the sleepy men wondered if the wine had been stronger than they suspected, for this specimen of the rolling stock of the *Chemin de Fer d'Al-*

geria looked more like a nightmare than a train. The tiny engine was so dilapidated that even a few bailing wire repairs would probably have been a decided improvement. The coaches were filthy, windows were gone, and their shades only torn remnants. The upholstery had been torn from many of the seats, the exposed springs waiting eagerly to tear into the trousers of the hapless passengers. In some compartments, no seat cushions remained and the bare boards of the seats did not appear inviting. Realization that the bombing and strafing the railroads had undergone, and the neglected cleaning and repairs were consequences of the war, made such a means of travel no more attractive. The enlisted men were assembled with difficulty and loaded into their cars first. Eight men were crowded into a compartment meant for a maximum of six, and the crowding was accentuated by canteens, packs, gas-masks, blanket rolls, and a number of odd shaped bundles containing eggs, bread and wine. Some of the officers had taken compartments in a fairly clean car which still had most of its windows and cushions. After they had removed

left the flat country and entered the foothills of the Atlas Mountains, the large fields gave way to smaller ones, and the tractors were replaced by plows. The French influence, so strong in Oran, disappeared from the scenery, and one



ORAN STATION

their packs and other gear and were settling comfortably on the soft seats, they were summarily ordered out since they were in the nurses' car. The two remaining compartments in the other officers' coach were insufficient, and after considerable bickering with the railroad officials, an additional car was added to the train. The officers, who had been slow to arouse and find a place for themselves, were rewarded for their procrastination by more comfortable accommodations in the new car. After another period of waiting, the train pulled out of the station and passed slowly through the suburbs of Oran at dawn on January 16.

The problem of making room in the small compartments for the people and their gear resulted in the equipment being stored into every possible nook and cranny. The baggage racks overflowed and numerous articles were hung from the hooks, door handles, and light fixtures of the coach. Every few minutes a piece of equipment came loose and heads developed bumps as the metal helmets fell. In order to get at the various parcels at mealtime, an almost complete reorganization of each compartment took place.

The first day's travel led through the farming district of the coastal plains, and as the smaller truck gardens near Oran were left behind, the larger farms of the French colonials passed the train windows in a panorama of expansive fields of grain and alfalfa. Tractors were seen frequently in the fields, and the farm buildings formed a cluster of white stucco and red tile in clumps of fruit groves, eucalyptus trees, and flower beds. As the train



MAKESHIFT STOVES FOR HEAT, HOT WATER
AND COOKING

began to see signs of the rural Arabian existence. One frequently saw an Arab working in a rocky field behind a primitive type of plow drawn by oxen, or a horse and an oxen harnessed together. At one of the stops for eating, an Arab with several companions was plowing in a nearby field. Pvt. Mallie Jenks went over to demonstrate his farming ability and took the wooden walking plow, pulled by a horse and a burrow, around the field a couple of times. The Arab farmer beamed and the others chattered at such



MALLIE JENKS TAKES OVER

a spontaneous demonstration of democracy, however unintentionally given, which was so in contrast to the usual treatment they received at the hands of the French. On the slopes of the hills and in the fertile valleys, vineyards occupied most of the land and at times stretched away into the distance as far as the eye could see. Occasional citrus

groves lay in the valleys, usually irrigated by a network of concrete sluice ways laid on top of the ground or elevated on trestles. The Arab dwellings of mud and sticks were usually surrounded by a maze of huge cactus plants, sometimes in rows to form fences for the barnyard. The mud-covered hay stacks, surrounded by a barrier of dried thorns, appeared from a distance much like a huge Easter egg sitting in a nest of paper grass.

In the afternoon, the trucks of the advance party passed along the road which ran near the railway. Shouts of greetings and encouragement were exchanged until the faster convoy outdistanced the dawdling train.

As evening came, the compartments were completely torn up in the attempt to provide horizontal space for each man. In some of the compartments, the two baggage racks made of rope were assigned to the two smallest men in the group. The seat cushions were suspended just below the baggage racks, making room for two more men. One man occupied each of the seats below the suspended cushions. By interlacing straps and ropes between the baggage racks, the seventh man could make himself a hammock, and the eighth man had the entire floor between the seats to himself. As soon as all eight were settled in their precarious perches, one of those on top would remember that he had forgotten to brush his teeth or had neglected some other part of his bed-time routine. This meant a complete shake-up for everyone on both his exit and re-entry. In other compartments, the seat cushions could not be removed and the makeshift Pullman accommodations only provided for six so that the other two were put out into the passageway to shift for themselves.

The cold drafty passageways were always dark, and filled with seething masses of miserable humanity. Each of the men had two blankets, entirely too little protection against the rush of cold air and the majority of the officers



CHOW LINE

and nurses had only an overcoat for cover. The few who had brought their sleeping bags or sufficient bedding rarely found enough floor space to lie down, and when they did, they were awakened every few minutes by the constant stream of people stumbling back and forth through the blackout to the little room at the end of the car. Fingers and legs were trampled, and occasionally a moan or a scream rang out as a foot was planted in the face of some unfortunate. The frequent stops of the train were always

accompanied by a grinding and jerking which sent a shudder through all the cars and occupants.

Many of the travelers preferred to watch the scenic beauty when a brilliant moon about midnight revealed the Atlas Mountains which the train was approaching. In the



CHOW LINE

distance, the pine forests gave way to the scrub juniper higher on the mountain side, followed nearer the top by bare, desolate areas devoid of all vegetation, and finally the snow-capped peaks in their dazzling whiteness. Early in the morning of the second day, the train passed through the railyards of Algiers, and in the dull dawn very little of interest could be seen.



A GROUP OF ARAB CHILDREN BEGGING FOR CANDY, GUM AND CIGARETTES

The kitchen crew rode in a baggage car and during the ride heated cans of C-rations over a field range burner. When a stop was made at meal time, the stoves and cans were thrown out on the ground and the heating process

finished. A chow line formed quickly as everyone filed past with his mess kit, frequently still dirty from the last meal, and fished his can of C-ration from the hot water. It was soon learned that the engineer could turn a stop-cock on the side of the engine and deliver hot water from the boiler, and at every stop a queue formed to get a helmet filled for washing and shaving, or a canteen cupful for making coffee. Although some of the stops were made at stations, many of them were in open country. Whenever it occurred, a crowd of Arabs (GI pronunciation—"Ay-rabs") soon gathered to offer eggs, wine, fruit, or articles of jewelry made of coin silver for barter. At one stop, early in the morning, a bakery was found near the station. The baker's stock of bread for the entire day was just being taken from the ovens as the hungry horde descended. Despite the babblings of the irate baker, his entire stock was bought in a matter of minutes. After each of these stops, a favorite prank of the men was to hold a stick of gum or piece of candy out the window as the train started, and make the Arab children run along beside the train after it. Many of them would run over the cinders in their bare feet for long distances in order to get the coveted delicacies. Once, on coming to a gorge during such a maneuver, the train continued on over the bridge and the urchins, unable

loaded with Italian prisoners passed by, and the glimpses caught of the faces looking out the tiny windows were the first prisoners seen.

The mountains at first appeared to rise abruptly, but as the train traveled on, the gradual upgrade was scarcely noticeable, although soon the men were looking down into



ARAB GUARDS

to stop, ran down the incline. On another occasion, as the train was going along slowly, a beautiful French girl of about four stood quietly by the track waving to the train. As her white teeth flashed in a beguiling smile, the men threw literally basketsful of cigarettes, gum, and candy to her. The Arab guards at the dozens of small bridges also received their share of the articles that Americans so generously tossed to them.

A few hospital trains were passed on their way back to the fixed hospitals in the Oran area. These hospital trains, consisting of the well-known "40 & 8" cars, which had been pressed into use with only minor repairs and revisions, were marked with red crosses. On one occasion, a hospital train and the 77th train stopped at the same place. The patients described in vivid detail how rough it was at the front, and the men heard these tales, whether true or false, with no little misgiving. At another stop, a long train



A GRAIN ELEVATOR AT SETIF

deep gorges. The tunnels grew more frequent and longer as the road passed farther into the mountains. At the approach of each tunnel, the windows were closed in the compartments which had windows and where the occupants were able to manipulate the strap which closed them. Some of the tunnels were very long and the smoke inside the compartments became so dense that breathing was unpleasant and difficult. By this time, the grades had become so steep that two locomotives were used, and even then the speed of the train was so reduced that the more ambitious men were able to run alongside.

The second day passed much as the first and was even more uncomfortable as there was much less inclination to enjoy the scenery and the antics of the Arab children. In the afternoon, a stop was made at Setif. For some unexplained reason the cars containing the baggage were cut off and attached to another train, and the hapless officers and nurses stood about and watched their invaluable bed rolls pass out of the station. Their attention was soon diverted to the sights about them; the Arab quarters and market, the camels plodding by with awkward yet graceful deliberation, the women with huge water pots carried on a shoulder, and the milling, screaming begging hordes of children. During the second night, the train passed over even higher mountain ranges. A third engine was attached and by their combined efforts the train finally got over the divide. Night life in the passageways and compartments was much as before, with the exception that everyone was dirtier, stiffer, colder, and more tired than on the first night. Next morning found the train going downgrade and now brakes were needed more than power.

At dusk the train passed through the outskirts of Constantine, and finally at dark, after three days and two nights on the trip, the weary travelers detrained at the Constantine station. Any tendency for exploration was immediately curtailed by the British guards, and the entire group was hustled through the station and into the street by the officers of the advance party.

The officers and nurses were loaded into British lorries and taken to the bivouac area where a few ward tents had been pitched in a thick grove of spruce and pine trees by



ARABS ON CAMELS

the advance party. This group, consisting of Lt. Col. Edward H. Hashinger, Capt. William F. Kuhn, Capt. Howard Dukes, Capt. Joseph Lalich, and twelve men, had dashed across the mountain country in about forty hours of continuous driving. One of the drivers, Arthur Lackey, had never before driven in the blackout, but had said nothing about it until he was speeding down a steep grade along a canyon and observed to the officer with him, "I think I'm going to like this blackout driving." Reaching Constantine twenty-four hours ahead of the main group, they had pitched the housekeeping tents at the bivouac site and set up a kitchen.

The men, burdened with their packs, lined up and began the march through the blacked-out city. The order to remain silent was scarcely necessary since they were all so tired that few felt like talking. After about a block and a half of fairly level street, they were led through the *Rue des Etats Unis* and up a winding road for the rest of the mile and one-half, providing further evidence that all the ground in Africa was uphill. Arriving at the bivouac site, the men were shown their area, and despite the blackout they rapidly pitched their pup tents on the rocky ground and were soon asleep.

Meanwhile, the officers and nurses huddled about in the penetrating cold. A few fortunate ones who had carried sleeping sacks immediately spread them in the tents and were asleep in a short time, but the majority of them had only overcoats between them and the frosty ground. The less fortunate individuals began very justifiable griping but received no satisfaction other than, "You will be notified when your bed rolls arrive." Finally, a few of the more aggressive officers secured a weapons carrier, and returning to the station, found the baggage cars which had been on a siding for several hours. The men who had

been assigned to guard the cars thought that they had been completely forgotten. The first two of the three cars of baggage had been unloaded and distributed before notice had been given by the railway officials that the baggage was now available on a siding. As the bed rolls were taken off the truck, an officer with a flashlight identified each one and called out the owner's name to be greeted by a shout of joy as another freezing soul was made happy. A few were so fast asleep on the hard ground that they could not be aroused. The nurses, unable to move the heavy bed rolls, unrolled them where they had been dropped, and it was soon very difficult to struggle over the sleeping figures. Shortly after midnight, a number of the men were awakened and sent back to the station to unload the rations and the enlisted men's barracks bags. Finally, just before dawn, the last of the baggage was unloaded and everyone was asleep.

The breakfast of hot cereal, crackers, jam, and coffee was a welcome respite from the C-rations of the past three days. The men then went about their numerous tasks, such as "scrounging" for wood for the kitchen and gathering straw to make their beds more comfortable. Rocks which had made the previous night so uncomfortable were dug out from under vital points. Slit latrines were dug and the screens erected, and many men repitched their tents in a more satisfactory place.

The officers on the advance detail had arranged for showers and the men were now marched over to the nearby French barracks in groups of sixteen for showers. Because of the scarcity of water and the fact that all sixteen showerheads turned on at the same time, a system was devised to conserve water and at the same time get everyone relatively clean. After each man was ready and standing under the shower, the water was turned on for about thirty seconds while the soaping operation was carried out. When every-



CURIOUS FRENCH CIVILIANS OUTSIDE CAMP

one was well-soaped, the shower was again turned on for approximately a minute for the rinse. Several were still standing expectantly under the drip when they were told that the shower was finished.

The garrison at this barracks, one of many in this part of Africa, was manned by a small force whose chief purpose was to quell the almost continuous Arab uprisings. The officers dressed in the usual flashy uniforms of the French Army; the soldiers in much less colorful uniforms;

and the Arab orderlies and workers in their native dress made up the personnel of the group.

The bivouac area, already shared with the personnel of the 51st Medical Battalion, became more crowded during the day as the 9th Evacuation Hospital, the 48th Surgical Hospital, and the 1st Auxiliary Surgical Group arrived. Between dawn and dark, the area was besieged from all sides by the Arabs in their eagerness to barter. Mingled with the Arabs were many French civilians who had climbed the steep hill from the city in order to view closely an American soldier. A double guard was established along a ditch at the front of the camp, and the civilians were not allowed to pass beyond this line. Even with a double guard and a definite boundary, it was difficult to keep them out.

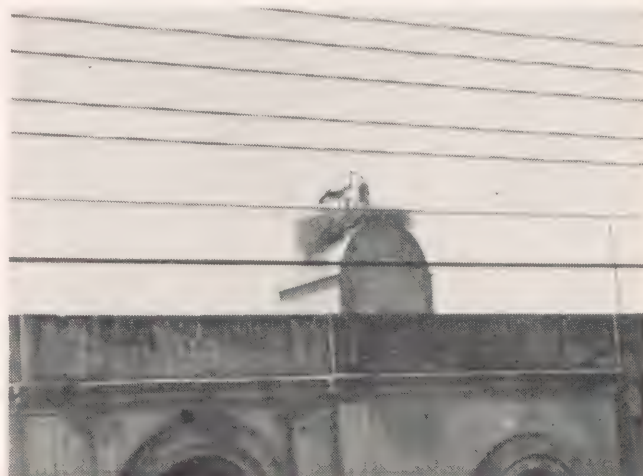
After the bivouac had been policed and made reasonably comfortable, the men were permitted to visit the city of Constantine. Nestled three thousand feet above sea level

maze of cliffs and gorges, it is a natural fortress, and its history is spotted with episodes of sieges and attacks by the Romans, Berbers, and Byzantines. It was known to the ancient Greeks as a spa, and was visited by Cleopatra. Remnants of the ancient baths can still be seen in the caves and ledges deep within the gorges. Pegs still can be seen in the rocky walls where they had been driven by the Roman's at the water's edge, but the erosive action of the stream has



SUSPENSION BRIDGE OVER THE RUMMEL GORGE

in a long arm of the Atlas Mountains jutting toward the sea, this cosmopolitan city of 113,000 people is south of the Mediterranean port of Phillippeville. Constantine was not visible from the bivouac area because of the dense forest but was approached by a walk through the woods which wound down the hill into town. An auto road descended a series of hairpin curves along precipitous rocky ledges. The city, divided by the Rummel Gorge, a rocky walled chasm hundreds of feet in depth, is probably one of the most picturesque cities in all Africa. Built in a



STORK'S NEST

left them thirty feet or more above its present surface. Many of the 77th sight-seers were given a resume of the city's history and were told frequently that Constantine had once had a large traffic in the exportation of lions for the torture of Christians in Rome. It was only a short trip to the old Roman baths with natural warm water which were located on the outskirts of the city. Nearby, a modern swimming pool had been built with a club house and a small beach, and a number of the men went swimming in the warm water even though it was the middle of January.

A view of the wide valley beyond the city's cliffs was gained from the suspension bridge which spans the deep gorge. The Arab quarter, set on the side of a hill, was made up of houses of stone with red tile roofs, packed together in irregular, haphazard fashion. In the narrow winding alley-ways between the houses, the ragged Arabs padded along through the dirt and refuse. The entire quarter, housing thousands of Arabs, was packed into such a small area that one bomb could have destroyed the Arab population. The area was strictly off-limits to British and Americans.

Stork's nests were seen here and there on the chimneys and roof tops, and many of the large birds stood about on one leg until frightened away by an amateur photographer. Africa is the winter habitat of the haughty stork and they added much to the unusual beauty of the surrounding country.

The business district of the city was a mixture of stone buildings of another age and attractive new shops. The numerous sidewalk cafes were crowded with soldiers, though only a very poor grade of wine could be bought. The favorite cafe was the Casino, a large modernistic structure of steel and stucco on the plaza in the center of the city. With complete disregard for the effect on the beauty of the plaza, a heavy ordnance unit had piled its extensive collection of wrecked trucks and tanks in the



streets and flower beds and surrounded the mass of twisted and broken implements of war by a high barrier of barbed wire. The shops and stores, depleted of their normal stocks by the war, now offered displays of Arab rugs, costume jewelry of the dime-store variety, leather goods, and other trinkets for sale at exorbitant prices. Several of the 77th people needed watches, and an exhaustive search of all the shops netted only a few, most of them second-hand. Pfc. Thomas Oakes, who purchased a pocket watch about the size of a stack of GI hot cakes, received numerous complaints about the loud ticking at night, as well as the expected comments concerning the striking mechanism. Behind closed doors a better and more valuable merchandise



THE CASINO AT CONSTANTINE

was to be had at more reasonable prices, but the men were here for such a short period that they did not have time to learn the various and devious means of getting behind the doors. Lt. Irene Weisbender came home with star dust in her eyes and proudly exhibited an engagement ring, and Lt. Robert Forsythe received the hearty congratulations of the entire group.

On January 18, the advance party left to select a site for the hospital near Tebessa, southeast of Constantine. On January 20 the main body had been packed before dawn for the trip in British personnel carriers, which had been depicted as being buses. Twenty-five men with their equipment were crammed into each of the vehicles which proved to be trucks with four longitudinal rows of seats. Fifteen men were comfortably seated, five more were squeezed in and the last five were more or less thrown in and the tailgate slammed shut. The day was clear and warm, and the trip through country with an everchanging panorama of scenic beauty was enjoyed less than it might have been since everyone fully expected to be strafed by the Luftwaffe on these roads which had been repeatedly strafed during the previous days. A large forward landing strip was passed at Youks le Bain and seeing the American and British fighter planes gave some sense of comfort. Bull-

dozers and graders churned about the field repairing the damages of the heavy rains and bombing attacks. In one corner of the field a heap of wrecked and burned planes told of the difficulties of operating an air force in this forward area. Since this was the only road into the area, the military traffic was extremely heavy, and the convoys of ammunition and ration trucks formed a constant stream



YOUKS LE BAIN
Note Gun Emplacement in Right Foreground

as they shuttled back and forth, building up the stock pile of supplies at Tebessa for the coming spring operations. Although road control was still maintained by the British, the preponderance of the vehicles was American, and as Tebessa was approached, more and more American units were seen along the way. Rest stops in this land without filling stations offered somewhat of a problem, but using blankets as screens the nurses were able to find a convenient clump of bushes. The British drivers, true to their custom, never missed an opportunity to stop, build a fire, and brew a pot of tea at the appointed hour.

After passing by mile after mile of ammunition stacked along the road approaching Tebessa, the convoy skirted



FIGHTER PLANES AT YOUKS LE BAIN

the ancient walled city and began a gradual ascent across a rising plain. In the distance a rocky ridge rose up and seemed to block the way, heavy woods covering the ground along its base. As the road wound through the woods along a rushing stream of water, the value of natural camouflage became evident, for here among the trees which had appeared so innocent from a distance, combat and service



units were camped, waiting to thrust into battle. A pass through the rocky escarpment was finally seen as the convoy rounded one of the curves. The military importance of this gap could now be readily understood, and the natural defensive position had been further strengthened by strategically placed artillery concealed in the woods. Road blocks and barbed wire entanglements were assembled at the narrowest point of a pass, ready to be thrown across the road to stop any thrust at Tebessa from the far side of the ridge. Having negotiated the steep climb through the pass, the steaming lorries now ran on for a mile or so over the road which stretched into the distance across a rolling plateau. A guide from the advance party led the convoy off the main road, and into a narrow dirt track running along the east side of the wooded ridge. After the convoy had turned out of the track and headed up the slope into the woods, the tents of the advance party could be seen in the gathering dusk.

The tents and messes had been set up among the pine trees at the beginning of the slope, and had been individually camouflaged with tree limbs and juniper bushes grubbed from the gravel soil. Since the unit was to be in bivouac, the Geneva Cross was not put out and the entire camp had to depend on camouflage for protection from

sun had gone down behind the ridge, the cold night settled rapidly and a fire was needed. The wind which blew down the slope was consistently cold, although some protection was afforded by the trees, and many of the men dug into the sides of the ravines which ran through the area and pitched their pup tents over the excavations, thus providing a reasonably warm, dry place. The officers and nurses had stoves in their tents and were able to keep warm, but the enlisted men had only two stoves available to them, one in their recreation tent and the other in their wash tent. Several models of improvised tin can stoves were constructed in the pup tents and some of them were a great help in warding off the bitter cold. No open fires were permitted during the night, and in the daylight hours the fires had to be smokeless lest the position of the camp be revealed to one of the frequent enemy reconnaissance planes. Gasoline poured into a can filled with sand made an excellent heating unit, but could not be used inside the pup tents. Wood for the stoves of the nurses' quarters, the administrative tents, the kitchen, and the two community stoves of the enlisted men was chopped by details assigned for this purpose. As time went on, the scrub pines on the higher reaches of the slope gradually disappeared as the loggers chopped them down for firewood. The officers



SNOW MAKES LIFE MISERABLE IN PUP TENTS ON "PINE RIDGE"

the Luftwaffe, which had undoubted air superiority at this time. The officers and nurses were quartered in ward tents, and the men in their pup tents, scattered throughout the wooded area. Other tents were erected for headquarters and supply. One mess tent served the entire organization, and as part of the strict camouflage regulations, only short mess lines under the trees were allowed. The men ate by platoons, passing to and from the mess tent along definite routes entirely under trees, taking care that no mess kit flashed in the sun. The nurses were not permitted to wear any part of their blue uniforms, and the officers sewed on embroidered insignia in place of the shiny bars. The unit had been told by higher command that it would remain in bivouac only a few days and then be set up for work. In view of these orders, an attempt was made to unpack as little equipment as possible, and it was difficult to convince the supply officer that stoves were needed in the tents.

"North Africa is primarily a cold country with a warm sun," has been stated by Alexander Powell in his book, *In Barbary*, and the 77th found verification for this statement in their existence on "Pine Ridge." During the days when the sun was out, it was comfortably warm, but on cloudy days it was always cold. Within an hour after the

supplied wood for their own stoves, and many of them became expert axemen.

Sleeping in pup tents during this cold weather required some ingenuity to keep warm. Pine boughs were used to make a protective mattress between the ground and the blankets. On going to bed, the men wore extra suits of heavy underwear and wrapped their feet in towels or a field jacket. One cold night Sgt. Arthur Girty and Pfc. Oscar Nelson were tented together when Girty dreamed that a tree was falling on him, and in his nightmare he jumped up to protect himself and his tentmate. Nelson, who recalled immediately on awakening that Girty kept a hunting knife in his bed, thought that he had become irrational and was about to attack him. The combined antics of the two men in the low tent served to uproot it, tear up the bed, and scatter clothes and equipment.

Clothes were washed in gasoline tins, heating the water over pine knot fires. Besides the difficulties of getting the clothes reasonably clean, there remained the problem of finding a place to hang the clothes that would not be exposed to air observation. Capt. Joseph Lulich, who adhered to the old boiling-method of laundering woolen clothes, finally admitted there was something wrong with his technic when his trouser legs would no longer reach

to his legging tops. Considerable difficulty was experienced in convincing some of the nurses that a pair of scanties hung on a juniper bush in the open would attract enemy as well as Allied fliers to the area. The wash tent in the enlisted men's area was seldom used as such for the gamblers soon took it over and each man washed and shaved in cold water outside his tent, unless he was the fortunate possessor of a gasoline stove. Regardless of the temperature T/5 Salvatore Tripani stripped to the waist each morning after breakfast, and standing in front of his tent, bathed leisurely from his helmet while the others sat huddled about the stoves. Having bathed, shaved, and trimmed his moustache, he slowly reclined, ignoring such minor matters as rain and sleet. One morning during the first snow of the year, Tripani was out as usual, apparently oblivious to the elements.

Food was a mixture of American and British rations; spam, vienna sausage and corned beef still making up the meat component. In the place of bread, British biscuits were served, and here the group was introduced to steak and kidney pudding, considered such a delicacy by the British. Soya link sausage was a frequent item at breakfast, and became known as "sawdust en sac." The shortage of coffee necessitated the use of British tea, a dry mixture of tea, powdered milk, and sugar. Hot cakes were served a few times but since the cooking for the entire unit was done on six field ranges, several hours were required to run the chow line through the mess tent. This was no doubt partly due to the people who went through the line two or three times. Frequently the food was so unappetizing that the garbage pail received the lion's share, and constant individual efforts were made to obtain food from other sources.

On one occasion, T/Sgt. John P. Malin cornered and caught a fine rabbit. Little time was wasted in skinning and cooking this delicious addition to the diet, and all the friends of the sergeant enjoyed their full share. It was not until later in the day that Cpl. James Mease came around looking for his pet rabbit which he had purchased from an Arab that it was realized what a mistake had been made. The Arabs, as usual, played an important part in helping supplement the diet, and every day a large crowd of them collected at the edge of camp to barter with eggs and chickens. Money actually had little value among the Arabs, but the clothing shortage made any piece of material a valuable asset. Mattress covers had increased in value to the equivalent of twenty dollars, and a ragged towel, a torn pair of pants, or even a bandana handkerchief could be exchanged for a chicken or several dozen eggs, if properly traded. Many nurses still carried white rayon hose which they had worn in the states and as there was little prospect of using them in Africa, they were anxious to turn them into something edible. The Arabs, however, always reluctant to do anything for their women, were not at all interested in the hose until an officer walked into the group wearing a pair of them as a muffler, then the trading became brisk. At about this time, the exchange value of the French franc was increased from one and one-half to two cents and the men who had on hand a large sum of French money made a profit by sending this home as a postal money order. The actual result, however, was to increase the cost of everything, even though there was little to buy.

Because of the extensive bartering with the Arabs, the authorities ordered periodic "shakedown" inspections, in

order to catch the men with any excess equipment and to be certain that none of the army's clothing was being traded off for eggs and chickens. Via the grapevine, the men usually had twenty-four hours warning when such an inspection was contemplated. On such an evening, the men could be seen scurrying up the hill as they cached any excess equipment in the ravines, under rock piles, in trees, and on a few occasions buried in holes in the ground. Lt. Randall Thompson, who made the inspection on one occasion, found one extra pair of shoe laces, but this was the extent of any excess or overage.

During the first week of bivouac on Pine Ridge, the equipment was brought in by Lt. Oscar Milnor, Sgt. Edward Ryan, and T/5 William Magyary, who had gone from Constantine to Phillippeville, where they supervised the unloading of the freighter which had carried the equipment of the 77th and two other hospitals from Oran. The job was complicated by the necessity of identifying and sorting each unit's equipment, and the Arab dock workers



77TH AND 9TH HOSPITAL SITES FROM THE HILL

had to be closely watched as the cargo was taken off the ship and moved into a nearby warehouse, since they could not read the lettering on the crates, and were not particularly interested in the problem of keeping the three groups separate. After a two-day trip on British lorries, the equipment reached the muddy road leading from the main highway to camp, but since these vehicles could not cope with the deep mud, the cargo was transferred into the 77th's trucks and brought on into the area.

In late January, several people of the unit became acquainted with one of the most unique military units of the war—Popsky's Private Army. Wearing P.P.A. shoulder patches, this group of three officers, eight enlisted men, and two Arab guides under the command of Major Pennecoff had come from the Libyan Desert into Gafsa ahead of Rommel's retreating Afrika Korps. These men, a Cairo businessman born in Belgium, a Frenchman, a Scotsman from Glasgow, and eight Englishmen had adapted themselves completely to the desert and its type of warfare and had done invaluable work for the British Army. Working under hazardous conditions behind enemy lines, and living at times on goat's milk and dates, they had demolished bridges, supply dumps, air fields, water sources, and any

thing else which would impede the retreat of the Axis. They had straggled into Gafsa to establish the first contact with American troops after traveling the last two hundred miles in relays with one jeep, their other five vehicles having been destroyed by enemy strafing. When Maj. John E. O'Donnell and several others of the 77th first met "Pop-sky" and his strange army in Tebessa, they were having a rest period while they reorganized and refitted the outfit. The last news of the only entire army the 77th had ever known came months later when it was learned that they were training a much larger unit to operate in Italy.

The 9th Evacuation Hospital was set up in an open area below the 77th bivouac and when it opened and began to receive patients, many of the 77th visited the hospital to see how some of the problems encountered at Oran were being handled. Since this was the first work of the 9th in the field, however, there was a mutual interchange of ideas and plans. In spite of the large area of the front serviced by this hospital there were only small numbers of casualties at that time, and their work was relatively light. In

the woods on either side of the 77th, other medical units were in bivouac, including the 48th Surgical Hospital, which moved out during the latter part of January and began to work at Maktar. Seeing the other two of Second Corps' three forward hospitals going to work was quite irritating to many of the 77th people, chafing under the yoke of idleness, and even the assurance that the leap-frog system of advancing hospitals would sooner or later put the 77th to work in a forward position, offered little consolation.

Each day passed much as the one before, and when the wood had been chopped for the day, the laundry done, and the mud cleaned from shoes, there was little else to occupy the time. Reading material was scarce, and frequently several were reading a book at the same time, one picking it up as another laid it down for a few minutes. February brought a little nicer weather, and the warm sun of the clear days stirred up considerable physical activity. A short walk to the main highway assured a ride into Tebessa on one of the many trucks returning empty from the front.



The ancient city of Tebessa, peopled chiefly by Arabs, is probably one of the dirtiest places the 77th has ever encountered, and is actually made up of two cities, an inner, walled city, and an outer, more recent section. During the heyday of the Roman Empire, Tebessa had been the outpost of its African domain, and the deepest inland point of penetration by Roman civilization. The outer section of the town contained the compound of the French Foreign



AMERICAN SOLDIERS BARTERING WITH ARABS

Legion, with its barracks and hospital, and a small business district of shops and stores operated by French, Arabs, or half-castes.

The high stone wall which enclosed the Roman city of the first two centuries still remains intact, and two gates led into the Arab section which now occupied the old walled city. One of these gates was interesting because it's one of the only four Roman Quadripottal arches still in existence. The native market place in the walled city, made up of open stalls covered by skins or colorful woolen canopies, provided a place of barter for the Arabs from miles around. Pushing along through the babbling groups of people which filled the streets and passages in front of the stalls, one always wondered how so much trading activity could take place over so little merchandise, for frequently the entire stock of one merchant could have been purchased for two or three dollars. In one stall, a merchant was selling dates, and the manner in which he handled the sticky mess with his filthy hands was almost as revolting as the scene in the next booth where an old man whose nose was almost gone from the ravages of some tropical disease was roasting halved goats' heads over an open charcoal brazier. Squatting about in the filth of the street, several of his customers picked at the nauseating mess with their fingers and threw the empty skulls in a pile by the booth. One section of the market was devoted to live stock, and here sheep, goats, donkeys, cows, camels, chickens, rabbits, and oxen were traded and sold.

The Arab is by nature a shrewd bargainer, and when an American soldier wished to buy something, he usually walked up, asked the price, and then either made the purchase outright or walked away if he thought the prices too high. This method of doing business was entirely foreign to the Arab, and though he had made a sale, he felt that he had been cheated by missing the usual arguing and haggling over the transaction. The attendant rise in prices to

American soldiers took the price of eggs to six francs (twelve cents) each, and within a short time the French people of the city were complaining that they could no longer afford to buy food. French soldiers were stationed about in the market place and when an Arab was caught selling eggs above the established price of two and one-half francs, he received a brutal cuffing and beating. The natural result of this situation was that eggs could no longer be found in the market and American soldiers had to do their bartering on the roads outside of town where there was no price ceiling. Many of the officers and men soon learned the accepted method of bartering, and frequently one of them could be seen squatting on his heels in a group of Arabs, wildly waving his arms and shouting as loudly as the natives. One article of commerce which was purchased by many people of the 77th was the "Prima" gasoline stove. Probably as many as twenty or thirty of them made their appearance in camp during the stay at Pine Ridge, and aside from being a very convenient source of heat for frying eggs in a mess kit or heating a can of water, they furnished an unlimited amount of amusement for the more mechanically minded members, since a certain amount of tinkering was required to keep them going. They were all used stoves, and many of them had been assembled from parts of other stoves by the coppersmith in the market place.

Many ruins of Roman structures can be seen in and about Tebessa. In the city itself, the well-preserved Temple of Minerva houses an excellent museum containing examples of Roman mosaics, pottery, and statuary. The ruins of the Basilica of Saint Crispine, built in the fourth century, A.D. by the Romans, lies just outside Tebessa on the Le Nef road. Among the ruins were seen remnants of the tomb of the martyred St. Crispine, who was beheaded at Tebessa in the year 304, the oratory built over it, and the basilica



TEMPLE OF MINERVA

itself, including remains of the splendid hostelry and stables built by the monks to accommodate the pilgrims.

When anyone made a trip into Tebessa, he was always commissioned by his friends to bring back various articles of food. At the baker's shop, one could buy the native bread, a very heavy, dark bread which was really good, sliced and toasted over an open fire. Eggs were always in demand. Occasionally, oranges and tangerines appeared in the market. Several times, a stunted variety of peanut

was sold on the streets, but the labor involved in roasting and shelling them was hardly worth their food value.

On the warm afternoons, many of the group went walking into the surrounding country. The climb up the hill back of camp was rewarded by an excellent view of the flat country toward Tebessa, and the airport at Youks le Bain, and the rolling hills toward Feriana and the battle zone. From here, no trace of the camp below could be seen unless some careless individual's fire was putting out too much smoke. A small detachment from a Signal Aircraft Warning Battalion lived on the ridge, and maintained contact with the airport by means of a two-way radio operated by a gasoline generator. Capt. Harless and Lt. Bennett made several excursions to the surrounding hills in search of Roman relics, and one evening came home with a complete human skeleton along with a number of Roman lamps, coins, and other treasures. On one of these trips, they narrowly escaped being strafed by a German plane.

On about February 1, Maj. Wayne Bartlett was sent on detached service to take charge of an auxiliary surgical team attached to a clearing station at Maktar. He was re-

lieved after about ten days by Maj. M. J. Rumold who stayed only a few days before the rapidly changing military situation in this sector made it necessary for him to return. During their stay at Maktar, they had seen enemy planes almost daily and on a few occasions an area near them was strafed and bombed.

The junction of Germany's veteran Afrika Korps under Rommel with Von Arnim's command in Tunisia permitted the enemy to launch offensive strokes against the lightly held portions of the long Allied line. On February 14, word came that German armored units reinforced by artillery and infantry and supported by dive bombers had struck westward from Faid and had broken through the Kasserine Pass, some twenty miles to the east of the 77th bivouac. Orders came that the 77th was to set up as rapidly as possible to take the overflow of patients from the 9th, and on the evening of St. Valentine's Day, the equipment was brought out of hiding in the woods and the hospital set up on the open slope below the bivouac area. During the first night, only ambulatory cases were sent up from the 9th, but on the following morning everyone was quite



surprised to see that hospital packing up and emptying itself of patients. By evening they were gone—to the rear. On the 15th and 16th, the rumor mongers had a field day. Some of the patients who were coming in directly from the front lines and other soldiers who wandered into camp infected the whole area with as wild a bunch of stories as had ever been heard. Some of them were true stories, some had been magnified, and some were just plain stories, but the fact that some of the true ones had been verified lent credence to the others, and coupled with the increasing thunder of artillery in the distance; all of them enhanced the air of impending excitement. Several of the soldiers who straggled in told of having been caught behind the rapidly advancing enemy armored columns and escaping through the woods and hills at night or in Arab's clothing.

Truck convoys of combat units streaked past the hospital on their way to the rear, and a steady stream of tanks, light artillery, and ammunition trucks rumbled through the pass and on up the road, racing forward with the needed supplies for the thin line of infantry and artillery of a badly shaken army fighting to hold its insecure foothold in the valleys and hills south and west of Kasserine. The machine gunners on the trucks, tanks, and half-tracks were all on the alert for enemy planes, and many of the stories which came into camp were about the horrible Stukas that darted over the ridges, struck, and were gone again; leaving the road littered with exploding and burning ammunition trucks. A platoon or two of tanks pulled off the highway and maneuvered into position along it; their guns pointing east toward the threat of German armor. In the woods on the east side of the pass, several artillery units moved in and added to the protection of this natural stronghold. Some of the guns were dug in only a few hundred yards from the hospital, and as the gunners wandered into camp looking for a cup of coffee, they glibly told that they had been ordered to hold the pass at all costs. This heroic statement only served to make more people wonder what a hospital was doing there on the wrong side of the pass.

Late in the afternoon of February 16, orders came to pack and move as rapidly as possible. At this time, some of the ward tents were still going up to accommodate the incoming patients, and the prospect of moving in a hurry with over 150 patients on hand and no transportation available was not pleasant. During the remainder of the day and all during the night, patients were moved about from one ward to another in order to concentrate them in as few tents as possible. The emptied tents and ward equipment was torn down, packed and loaded into whatever trucks could be released by the Second Corps operations office. Other trucks were borrowed from the 51st Medical Battalion and the 48th Surgical Hospital, which had already moved back. Before daylight on the morning of the 17th, the advance party left with one kitchen unit and the equipment which had been packed to establish a new camp some sixty miles to the rear near the town of La Meskiana. By noon, enough ambulances had been assembled to carry the nurses, and they were started back; by mid-afternoon nearly all the essential equipment had been loaded and sent out; and by evening word came from the advance party that they were ready to start receiving patients. As rapidly as trucks and ambulances came in, they were loaded with patients; any patient who could sit up went into a truck and the more severely wounded into the ambulances. As the tents were emptied, they were struck and the equipment

was packed and loaded. Trucks were borrowed or commandeered from nearly every unit in the area, many of their drivers had been going for two or three days and nights without sleep; a few had been replaced by infantrymen or clerks. S/Sgt. Parten, who left with a truck load of equipment about two o'clock in the morning was riding along on top of the load in the cold wind, and when they stopped for a rest he complimented the driver on the manner in which he was handling the truck in the blackout. The driver replied, "Thanks, Sarge. I never drove a 6x6 before tonight."

About midnight it had started to snow and a bitterly cold wind was blowing through the area. The officers and men, who still remained, spent the time between trucks standing about a few fires they had built, feeling that the danger from the Luftwaffe in the snow storm was probably less than the danger of freezing. One huddle of officers was standing near the spot where the headquarters tent had been when the field telephone, still hanging on a stake, began to ring. One of the officers picked it up, answered, listened a while, and then put it back with a queer look on his face. The message he had received was: "This is the operator at 'Speedy Rear.' Your telephone will no longer be any good as we are moving back now. We advise you to do the same as soon as possible." This news was not particularly cheering, especially since Speedy Rear was on the protected side of the pass. By shortly after sun up the morning of February 18, the last trucks pulled out of the area and down through the pass. The rumble of artillery to the east was becoming louder all the time, but as yet no enemy had been seen. Allied planes were patrolling the vital highway now, and once when the traffic had stopped, a plane zoomed low over the road. When only one machine gun opened up from the many vehicles, an officer went up to the gunner and said, "Wasn't that a Spitfire?" The gunner, looking after the climbing plane, replied, "No Sir, I don't think so. We usually get them."

The advance detail had proceeded to the site selected by Second Corps Headquarters and had already erected one mess tent and the kitchen when they received orders from the same headquarters to move farther back, through La Meskiana to about five miles northwest of the town and select a site in the edge of the woods. They arrived at the new area at three thirty in the afternoon and began again to set up the hospital on a sloping field at the edge of a pine woods. The enlisted men pitched the tents as rapidly as possible, and as soon as a tent was up, a crew of officers went in and grubbed out the mesquite and juniper bushes and pulled out the weeds and bunch grass. When the floor had been cleared, the nurses came in to set up the cots, make up the beds, arrange the ward boxes, and get the tent ready to receive patients who were then moved in as rapidly as the wards were ready. The soil was very rocky and it was difficult to get the tent pins driven properly in the dark. As the equipment came in, it was dumped off in one huge pile so that the trucks could be released to return for another load and this caused considerable delay in locating a particular crate of supplies from the heap. The entire process was retarded somewhat by this bottleneck, and some of the patients had to wait in the ambulances and trucks while a ward was being made ready for them. Everybody worked during the entire night, regardless of rank, sex, or age, and before dawn all the patients were in bed and a cooked breakfast ready for them. Some of the personnel were taken off at this time and told to get

some sleep so that they would be ready to relieve the others later in the day. Many of the enlisted men and several of the officers and nurses had had no sleep for forty-eight hours, and had been working in freezing temperatures, with only an occasional cup of coffee and a spam sandwich. There was no place to sleep except in the open, and daylight brought an amusing picture of nurses, officers, and men strewn about the area in their bed rolls or blankets. With morning came word from Col. Arnest, the Second Corps Surgeon, that the 77th would be receiving large numbers of fresh casualties by evening. Instead of being able to slow down and rest, the entire group went back to the task of making ready for an influx of new patients, which began to arrive during the evening. By morning, 480 patients had been received and the hospital's census was 628. In about forty-eight hours, more than one hundred tons of equipment, and the personnel of over four hundred and about 150 patients had been moved a distance of sixty miles, and nearly five hundred new casualties received and cared for; all this without a mishap more serious than a convoy of seven trucks that was lost for about two hours.

The hospital itself was set up along a small side road about a mile from the main Constantine-Tebessa highway. The surgery section was on one side of the road and the medical section, administrative and supply sections, and mess on the other. The sandy, rocky soil toward the upper part of the slope gradually gave way to the brown loam of a grain field on the lower side of the road.

This was the 77th's first experience in receiving large numbers of casualties and many problems developed as they came in, a single convoy of ambulances frequently bringing in as many as 150 or two hundred patients at a time. Practically all the patients arrived with an emergency medical tag as their only record so that a 52c (Field Medical Record) had to be made out for each one, and the number of clerks who worked in the receiving department at that time was not sufficient to keep up when a large convoy of ambulances descended on them. The tables of organization of an evacuation hospital at that time included such a small number of men to be assigned as litter bearers that, practically speaking, the hospital had no litter bearers. This meant that men who had worked a full twelve hour shift at their job of ward attendant, cook, clerk, or whatever they were assigned to do, frequently had to be routed from bed to do another six, eight, or ten hour shift at carrying litters and still go back to their regular job when the time came. Some of their comments about strikers in war plants at home were very bitter and profane, but few of them ever did any more than good-natured complaining about their own job, and when an emergency arose, enough volunteers to handle it could always be easily obtained. The importance of having the receiving ward and the x-ray department centrally located was appreciated when it was necessary for the litter bearers to carry the patients a long distance to and from these tents.

The operating ward, still housed in one ward tent, proved somewhat inadequate and in fact could not provide enough working space for all the available operating teams to work at one time. The low ceiling of the tent did not furnish enough "head room" for the proper arrangement of the lighting, and made it difficult to move about in the tent. One storage tent, which would afford more utilizable space because of its higher sides and ceiling, was set up and some

of the operating room furniture moved into it as a trial. Although it was never used at this stop, the arrangement appeared attractive and plans were made to reorganize the operating room along these lines.

During the few days of operation as a hospital at Pine Ridge, the electricians were given a pyramidal tent, and the four small one and one-half kilowatt generators were mounted on a wooden stand with the exhaust piped outside the tent. Twenty-seven tents had been wired at Pine Ridge before the order to move had been issued. In the rush of moving, the wiring from each tent had been taken down intact with the sockets still attached, and the ease with which these pre-assembled units could be installed at La Meskiana resulted in the formation of plans by the electricians, Grattias and Koenn, whereby all the tent wiring could be made up into units and groups ready for rapid installation. Due to the shortage of wire it was frequently necessary to place the generators close to their load, and the x-ray department kept its two one and one-half K.W. generators under a small dog house outside the tent. Early in March, the x-ray department acquired a five K.W. generator which would supply more reliable power and the two small ones were given to the electrical department. More wire was obtained about this time, and later in the month, a second five K.W. machine was procured. Now all the wards, operating tent and administrative tents could be furnished with at least a little light, although the aggregate of all these power units was still somewhat inadequate for a 750-bed hospital. The added duties of the electricians had increased their work to such an extent that Pvts. Griggs and Pilch were assigned to the department. The gasoline motors of the smaller generators, made for a type of gasoline not available at the time, had to be taken apart completely and cleaned every few days.

In nearly every department new problems arose and had to be solved. The medical department began to see more and more cases of communicable disease, and an isolation ward was developed whereby the patient could be screened off from other occupants of the tent; a bath and delousing tent was established where the infested patients could be taken, whether litter or walking cases, shaved by the attendant, and deloused by a kerosene-soap mixture before admission to the ward; a Serbian barrel type of decontaminator was constructed to delouse the clothes. The evacuation department was still wrestling with the plan Gerlach had conceived on the mud flats of Oran and trying to perfect it. Col. Burnet had issued the order that every patient who entered the hospital must be considered as a potential evacuee, and Gerlach devised an evacuation report blank which was slipped into every patient's record as he was admitted. As soon as he was ready for evacuation, the blank filled in and sent to the evacuation office would show the patient's location in the hospital, even to the bed number; whether he was to travel as a walking or litter patient and about how many days his recovery was expected to require. From this latter bit of information, the evacuation department could determine his mode of travel and the hospital to which he could be sent. Thus, patients requiring only a short period for recovery were sent by ambulance to a hospital at Constantine; more seriously ill or wounded patients were taken by ambulance to the airport at Youks le Bain and flown back to the Oran area. Many patients entered the hospital with their clothing torn, bloody, or sometimes nearly blown off, and the

clothing of others was frequently ripped, torn, or cut by the surgeon in order to gain access to the wound. This meant that the patient must be given enough clothing to complete his uniform if he were to be returned to duty from the hospital, or enough to clothe him adequately for



TELEPHONE WIRES WERE STRUNG TO MAINTAIN SIXTEEN FIELD TELEPHONES

traveling if he were to be evacuated. The army manual assigns this job of reclothing to the supply department, but like many other things in the manual, the method was found awkward, and the evacuation department was given the task. Each patient's requirement was different, and until exacuation's reclothing section began to visit each patient and accurately determine his needs, many errors were made. Patients who were to be evacuated on litters were sometimes given new shoes, an obvious waste, and ambulatory patients sometimes walked out to the ambulance in their stocking or bare feet. But improvements were being made each day, and with every large evacuation, the plan worked more smoothly.

The mess department, still serving spam, vienna sausages, and C rations, set up a mess for ambulatory patients, lightening the load on the corps men. The food the patients received was considerably better than it had been at Oran in that canned chicken, tuna fish, pureed vegetables, extra milk, and fruit juice were now being issued as supplemental rations for hospital patients. No fresh meat had been issued since early in January.

The telephone operators had their troubles also. The

one outside line, consisting of twelve miles of field wire, lying on the ground all the way, was out of commission more of the time than it was working. On one occasion, some goats had eaten the insulation off the wires and caused an interruption of service for a day or so until the defect could be found and repaired. Another time, some Arabs had cut about fifty feet of wire out of the line and when apprehended had said that they wanted it for a clothes line. This story was doubted by nearly everyone who heard it, however, since very rarely was an Arab seen wearing clothes which had been laundered. Still another time, the tanks of a division moving up to the battlefield had cut the line in several places. Due to the fluid military situation, the exchange switchboards to which the 77th was connected changed so frequently that the 77th operators, Masten and Howard, were never sure of their code name. On the morning of one day, the 77th was "Sharpe" off the "Speedy Rear" switchboard, but by afternoon the operators found themselves connected to "Gloomy Gus," and by the next morning to "Shoe Horn." Aside from these troubles, the telephone operators had to maintain sixteen field telephones and lines which were strung about the hospital area.

The problem of water supply for the hospital was more difficult here than it had previously been. The nearest water point was more than ten miles away, and all the water for drinking, cooking, and washing had to be hauled from this point with the two 350-gallon trailers. Ten gallon milk cans had been obtained for water storage for the mess department, and the wards were supplied from thirty gallon Lister bags, hung from a tripod of poles near each ward. A weapons carrier hauled half of the milk cans and pulled one of the water trailers over the ten miles to the water purification point where it was usually necessary to wait in line for a considerable time. Having filled the cans and the trailer tank, it returned to camp, delivered the cans to the mess and then drove around through the area filling the Lister bags by means of a small hand pump mounted on the trailer. By this time the other trailer and cans were usually empty and another trip would be started. In this way, at least one truck was kept running twenty-four hours a day and even then was unable at times to meet the demands of the more than a thousand people who depended upon it for their water.

Included in the recommended organization of a 750-bed evacuation hospital is a shock ward, a pre-operative ward and a post-operative ward. During the experiences at Oran, it had been suspected that this arrangement was not all that it should be, and at La Meskiana the suspicion was confirmed. Patients who were admitted to the hospital in a state of shock could be taken directly to the shock ward, but patients were also developing shock in wards before and after operation, and in the operating tent. It soon became evident that patients could be adequately treated for shock wherever they happened to be and that it was manifestly easier for both patient and personnel to carry the treatment to the patient than it was to transfer him to the shock ward and then to another ward after his treatment. The pre- and post-operative wards were abandoned because, again the extra manpower involved in carrying a litter case to and from three wards could be materially reduced; the patient was not subjected to so much handling; and because this arrangement made it difficult for a doctor to keep track of his patient through the maze of different

wards. When whole blood was needed for transfusion, the officers and men of the unit were used as donors since there was no other source, and some of the men who volunteered to give blood were already in a state of semi-exhaustion. One man reported to Capt. Lalich in the shock laboratory to offer his blood, but appeared so exhausted after chopping wood and carrying litters for thirty-six hours without rest that he was immediately given an ounce of whisky, customarily given each donor after the blood had been drawn, and sent home to get some rest.

A few days before the equipment had been loaded on the ship at Oran, a deal was consummated with a quartermaster dump, and enough pyramidal tents were obtained to house the officers and nurses; the plan being to give the small wall tents to the enlisted men. Extra cots were also obtained so that each man could have one. At La Meskiana the pyramidal tents were brought out for use, but some of the nurses elected to live in the privacy of small wall tents, two to a tent without heat, than to live four to a pyramidal tent with a stove, and others remained in the two ward tents which had been erected for them the second day. When the "new" pyramidal tents were unpacked they were found to be used tents of the 1918 variety, light tan in color, with low sides, and in such a state of degeneration that the majority of them could not be used at all. Pvt. Agee was able to mend a few of them, and after Sgt. Logan had painted them they held in light well enough to pass the blackout regulations and kept out enough of the rain to be usable. When they had been issued to the officers, only a few were left over for the men, and the remainder of the men were quartered in ward tents. This was a great improvement over their life in the cold mud at Oran and their pup tent existence in the freezing weather of Pine Ridge. The living quarters of all the personnel were dispersed through the scrubby pine woods and some of the tents of the officers and men were scattered as far as two hundred or three hundred yards from the hospital area. Many of them had trouble finding their tents in the blackout even with the aid of flashlights. The officers' latrine was hidden in a particularly difficult place, and sometimes an officer would wander around all through the woods before he finally made his way back to his own tent.

The problem of preventing tent fires from the stove chimneys still existed, but had been remedied to a great extent by a more ingenious arrangement of the tin cans and metal guards, and the work of the fire department was not particularly heavy. One evening, as T/3 Warren Bauer and T/5's James Cover and Rollin Jerome were eating their evening meal, they heard a fire alarm but paid no particular attention to it. When they returned to the tent they occupied with T/4 Lilburn Lay, they found that individual poking about in the smoking ruins of their tent and mumbling about the inflammability of gasoline. Next day, four men drew new equipment from the supply department.

Supplying fire wood for the fifty or more stoves of the wards and living quarters was no small task, and a crew of fifteen to twenty men and two trucks were assigned to the work. Since many of the men were not adept at using an axe, the mortality rate on axe handles was rather high, and on some days as many as ten axe handles would be broken and had to be replaced. Fortunately, a stock of handles had been found in Constantine, and although they were made for another type of axe, they could be worked over

and made usable. The details went up into the hills with the trucks, felled the trees, trimmed them, and hauled the logs back to camp. The majority of them was dumped off in a stock pile near the supply area and a few were hauled to a central part of the officers' area. The officers sawed and split their own wood, but the task of supplying the stoves in the ward fell to the corps men who were usually so busy during their tour of duty that the wood had to



TWO 350-GALLON TRAILERS WERE USED TO SUPPLY WATER FOR A THOUSAND PEOPLE

be chopped at other times. The amount of work involved in this task varied, of course, with the weather, and although there were many cold, wet days, the weather improved somewhat during the latter part of the stay and fires were not required in the living quarters and administrative tents during the day. A fire was always necessary in the wards since this was the only means of heating water for hot compresses, gargles, hot water bottles, and bath water for the patients.

Personal laundry was still being done in helmets, and now the laundered articles could be hung out on the juniper bushes or on clothes lines since the unit was no longer in

hiding. Quite a lot of excitement was stirred up one day when the grape vine produced the rumor that the quartermaster laundry unit in Constantine which was doing the hospital laundry was going to start doing personal laundry for everyone. The rumor became official in a few days, and a pile of laundry bags nearly the size of a ward tent appeared at the supply department area. It was plainly stated in advertisements in several of the magazines that every soldier in the field had access to laundry service and an accompanying picture showed a neatly pressed soldier charging into the enemy lines, his necktie flying in the wind. There was usually another picture of a large, shiny, intricate machine which would do everything except fold the clothes and put them away in a barracks bag, but no one in the outfit had ever seen one of the things nor had anyone had any laundry service from an army installation since coming overseas. When the laundry returned, there was a generalized handing down of woolen garments from the larger men to the smaller; at the top of the line, new clothing had to be drawn, and at the little end there was a good supply of stock for trading with the Arabs. Nothing had been ironed or pressed, of course, but then it hadn't been for months. The clothes were, for the most part, clean, and best of all, no skin had been rubbed from knuckles in the process. Many vows were taken not to send woollens to the laundry the next time, but next time never came and the helmet method came into vogue again.

About February 21, information was received that the military situation was still not very favorable and that Rommel's forces were within a few miles of the previous camp site at Pine Ridge. The hospital was ordered to evacuate its patients and be prepared to move further back to a point near Souk Ahras, if necessary. During the process of packing, however, the orders were revoked and everyone was considerably relieved since this probably meant that Rommel had been stopped. Subsequent news confirmed this assumption, when it was learned that the advancing column had been stopped and turned back. One truck load of German military police had come through the lines somehow and were preparing to take over their assigned mission of traffic control when they were recognized and captured by an astounded group of American MP's at a busy crossroad in Tebessa.

Among the patients who were admitted at La Meskiana was Capt. Kermit Roosevelt, who had been rather seriously wounded in the battle of the Gafsa-Feriana sector, and his father, Brig. Gen. Theodore Roosevelt, visited him in the ward. As before, when the general had visited the hospital in Oran, everyone was impressed by this man who commanded so much respect and admiration from all who knew him.

During the time when rumors were rampant about the precarious military situation and the incoming patients furnished the most reliable source of news, there were repeated air raid alerts and several rumors of impending enemy paratrooper attacks. The 51st Medical Battalion was again camped in the woods next to the 77th, and one of their guards spread the alarm one night that he had seen paratroopers. The 77th's outside telephone line was in one of its periods of impotence at the time so that no help could be summoned from an armed force in this manner, and Maj. O'Donnell was dispatched in a jeep to Second Corps Headquarters to summon aid. After a hair-raising ride through the field and under a railway culvert to avoid

the main road which, he reasoned, was probably under enemy control, he reached headquarters and returned with a platoon of riflemen. They cautiously approached camp, and after a fairly thorough search were unable to find the enemy. The following morning, one of the white sheets that formed the border of the large red cross at the edge of camp was missing and it was assumed that the guard had seen an Arab stealing the sheet and mistook him for a paratrooper gathering up his 'chute. A few nights later, as Pvt. Arthur Lewis was walking guard near the Geneva cross, he saw something white moving slowly toward the woods. He shouted the prescribed "Halt! Halt! Halt!" almost as one word and then emptied his automatic at the figure as it disappeared into the woods. The following morning, several sheets were missing from the cross.

The Arabs still plagued the camp fringes, but the best egg markets were in the towns of La Meskiana, about three miles distant, and in Ain Beda, about twenty miles back toward Constantine. Transportation to either place was a simple matter on the busy highway, and frequently one party of officers or men returned from Ain Beda with three hundred or four hundred eggs for themselves and their friends. Oranges were plentiful in the market there, and when these two articles could be obtained so easily, the spam and C rations were frequently passed up for a meal of fried eggs. It was not uncommon to see a man go through the mess line, pick up a handful of hard crackers, or a slice of bread when available, march on past the C rations, out of the mess tent, and back to his own tent to fry eggs.

Numerous accidents occurred on the busy Constantine-Tebessa highway and many cases of injury were brought into the hospital. Not infrequently, an Arab would be injured and brought in for emergency treatment, and the personnel were always impressed by their childish and sometimes animal-like reaction to medical treatment. One night one of them had been caught in the act of stealing a soldier's barracks bag and had been shot in the leg, producing a compound fracture. His ride into the hospital in a truck over rough roads had not helped his general condition, but his state of shock did not seem very severe and he was placed on a litter and started toward the operating room. Having fallen off the litter once on the way in attempting to escape, he arrived there in a state of panic, and after one more attempt to get off the plaster table he lay back quietly and died. No doubt the medical record on the case gave the wound as the cause of death, but the men who had seen him maintained that this was a true incident of a man being "scared to death." His body was taken to the morgue tent but since there was no means of identification, three days passed before one of the local Arab potentates had rounded up enough Arabs to identify it. The relatives who came to claim the body had no means of transportation except a small burrow, but after duly signing a memorandum receipt they were allowed to take out the body on a litter. When last seen, the family was moving off down the hill, the litter balanced precariously across the little burro's back, held in place by an Arab man riding behind the litter. The women, as usual, were walking along behind. This custom of an Arab riding along on a burro while his wife walked behind, usually carrying whatever burden there was, seemed strange to Americans at first, but as in many other sights, the unusual soon became common. Later on, when they saw the women walking in front of their mounted master, the scene appeared

strange. German mines had been found in the area, and the Arabs were sending their women ahead to test the ground.

Several people of the unit had an opportunity to see an Arab funeral ceremony, and were impressed by the weird, high-pitched wailing of the mourners as they sang and chanted in the minor key of all their music. The body was carried aloft on a litter of sticks on the shoulders of four men, and a horde of wailing, gyrating mourners danced about the departed's remains as it was borne along the road. When the shallow grave was reached, the litter was placed beside it and the entourage sat down cross-legged around it and continued the babble of weeping and wailing until, at a signal from the leader, the noise suddenly stopped, the body was unceremoniously dumped into the grave, covered with sticks, grass, wild flowers, and about a foot of earth thrown on top. The group, having quieted down, straggled away leaving the grave entirely unmarked among a hodge-podge of others, all unmarked.

The government control of the southern districts lies in the hands of the Caid, the feudal chieftains who are virtually independent rulers. Their wealth is believed to be enormous. They have splendid palaces in the cities and enormous fortress-castles where they dwell in feudal grandeur. They make their own rules and laws, collect their own taxes and maintain their own military establishments. A few of the 77th officers and nurses had dinner at the home of the Caid who ruled the La Meskiana area. Lt. Paul E. Bennett wrote the following excerpt of a letter to his friends in the United States:

"Yesterday afforded another unusual and quite interesting experience which will remain in my memory a long, long time. Visited and dined with a "Caid." The trip itself was a bit long and tiresome, then, too, I dug my blouse out of my bed roll and was all uncomfortably dressed. On arrival, we were escorted into a sort of veranda with gorgeous rugs and tapestries over the floor and wall. Then after a little while we were asked to go into the so-called dining room which was about forty feet long and twenty feet wide. The floor was again covered with beautiful Arabic and Persian rugs. Beautiful drapes hung about the entrance and windows. Colored paintings of the Caid's ancestry filled all vacant spaces on the walls. In the middle of the floor were three large copper trays about three feet in diameter setting on stools about seven inches high. Then placed about the trays were cushions of most unusual and colorful designs. We seated ourselves on the latter with our legs crossed in the true Arabian style and the servants started bringing in the food. First we had some kind of chicken soup with baked chicken legs floating around in it. The next course was a barbecued lamb, one for each tray, the legs had been amputated at the elbow and knee joints, and the animal was standing up on the tray with head, teeth and eyes still intact. Well, we pulled huge pieces of meat off the carcass with our hands and ate accordingly. The next course consisted of turnips and parsnips served with an unusual type of cereal, after which we took some time out, stretched our tired legs and washed our hands. Then we were served baked chicken and a type of unleavened bread, the latter being followed by a sweet junket. Then some kind of cakes made of honey, sugar and almonds. Then fruit and then tea with a distillate added from orange flowers. All the above was served with wine and required about three and one-half hours. I am getting a copy of the history of the Caid's family. It seems

that this particular Caid, whose name is Benbouzid Menouar, rules an area of about six hundred square miles and some eight-hundred thousand Arabs. He collects taxes from them and is also paid by the French government. I was served tea from a silver teapot given to the Caid's grandfather by Napoleon III and the Persian rug I sat on was 177 years old."

Caid Benbouzid Menouar says that his ancestors came from Bagdad, Arabia before the year 1700 to settle in the territory of Canrobert, Ain Beida, La Meskiana and Sedrata. At this time the Turks controlled the country but they agreed that the Caid should be the executive for the tribes of the region. The rule of these territories was passed down through the Benbouzid family to the time of the present chieftain, Benbouzid Menouar.



CAID BENBOUZID MENOVAR

The 77th gained the service of Miss Natalie Gould of the American Red Cross when she was attached to the unit at La Meskiana. This type of service for the patients was entirely new to the 77th, and although clubmobiles, coffee and doughnut stands and such like had been heard of, they had never been seen in Africa. Miss Gould was given a small wall tent for the storage of her supplies, replenished from a clubmobile which came around periodically, and within a few days she was making rounds several times daily through the wards, passing out cigarettes, books, and toilet articles, and writing letters for the severely wounded patients. The need for this type of service had been felt for some time; since the patients, cut off from their own PX rations, were usually without their shaving tackle and cigarettes and had to rely on whatever the 77th personnel could give them. Razors and combs were scarce, shaving cream, usually of the brushless variety, had to be rationed, and there was never enough soap. At times toilet soap was so scarce that the patients were washed with GI soap, the army's strong soap for laundry and mess gear washing, and the reaction of the ward personnel and patients to the toilet soap which Miss Gould passed out was reminiscent of children on Christmas morning.

During the latter part of the stay at La Meskiana, several truck loads of 77th personnel went to view the ruins

of the ancient Roman city of Timgad, some distance northwest of La Meskiana. These ruins, the most complete in Africa, and rivaling the ruins at Pompeii and Rome in state of preservation, had been only partially excavated, but several well preserved structures were still standing. In the colosseum, the acoustics were such that the click of a camera could be heard from the top of the open amphitheater to the stage. Many mosaics had been completely restored, and a few remained intact. Statuary adorned all the structures, and statues of Aesculapius, the god of medicine, and Hygeia, the goddess of health, were in nearly perfect condition. Under one large archway ruts four inches deep had been worn in the solid rock of the pavement by the steel rims of the chariot wheels. The main part of the city had been built in the first and second centuries A. D., while the Byzantine section had been added by the Christians in the third century. The entire city had been destroyed in about the fifth century A. D. Practically all the marble and other stone used in the construction of the city had been brought to Africa from Rome in slave-driven galleys and then transported overland by horse or ox-drawn chariots, and when one saw the huge blocks of stone, some weighing several tons, he realized what an extensive project this had been.

During the experiences of the move from Pine Ridge to La Meskiana, the need for a well-organized and definite moving plan was felt very keenly, and during the period at La Meskiana, such a plan was worked out. This new scheme involved movement by units and an exact assignment of each truck for a certain unit of equipment and personnel. An advance detachment was to leave far enough ahead of the main group to select a site on sloping, well drained ground, preferably of such a nature that it would

not become excessively muddy when it rained. Access to a main highway should be easy, and the approach road should not be so rough as to subject incoming casualties to excessive rough riding. Having chosen a site, the detail was to stake out the roadways through the camp according to the plans, and mark the future location of each tent by driving the right front stake of each tent and marking it with a sign bearing the tent's name or number. At the old site, each unit such as one medical ward, is torn down, packed and stacked up near the road by the personnel who operate that unit. The required number of trucks has been determined and ordered from the quartermaster trucking units, and on their arrival, each one is given a number and is assigned a unit of equipment and personnel to haul. A truck backs up to a packed ward, the equipment is loaded by the personnel of the ward, who then load their personal gear and get on the truck on top of the load. The convoy is assembled, proceeds to the new location; the truck is directed to the designated spot of the medical ward, and unloaded; within a few minutes after arrival of the convoy, erection of the hospital is going on simultaneously all over the area. A third section of the movement stayed behind the main body to police the area, close the latrines, and keep the Arabs out of the area until all the equipment had been removed.

Patients continued to arrive in decreasing numbers during the latter part of March, and on March 27, the hospital was closed and moved, according to the new plan, to a site about one mile north of Tebessa. The new procedure of movement was so effective that within twenty-two hours of the time the first movement left the old site, the hospital had been completely erected in a very efficient ground plan, 157 patients had been admitted and treated, and there



THE RUINS OF THE ANCIENT ROMAN CITY OF TIMGAD

had been a minimum of confusion and delay. At the end of forty-eight hours, 629 patients had been admitted. The entire scheme of movement and alignment of the camp site, conceived and worked out in many of its details chiefly by Lt. Col. Hashinger, the executive officer, was a credit to its creator and a monument to the close co-operation of the entire organization under the command of Col. Burnet. Furthermore, it proved that a 750-bed evacuation hospital could be moved as rapidly as a smaller unit if enough



COMMON SIGHTS IN NORTH AFRICA

transportation was provided and the move properly organized. The superior type of medical care which had always characterized the unit could now be maintained with less individual effort, due chiefly to the more efficient arrangement of the camp site.

The hospital was set up on a slightly sloping meadow of thick, green sod. A half mile to the north was a large gasoline and ammunition dump; the Youks les Bains airport lay a mile to the west; and in a large field directly east of the area, a herd of camels grazed. On the road to Tebessa was a barbed wire prisoner of war enclosure, the first the 77th had seen, and although some of the prisoners were German, the majority were Italians.

The patients who were admitted to the hospital came from the entire American sector of the line from as far north as the Medjez-el-Bab area, and south to the Chott Djerid which formed the anchor at the right flank of the line. The heaviest fighting at the time was in the areas of Gafsa, El Guettar, and Maknassy where the push was on as the American Second Corps troops started the drives toward Gabes and Sfax to link up with the British Eighth Army driving Rommel into the Tunisian pocket. The majority of casualties came from the First Division, and at the beginning of the stay at Tebessa, the Sixteenth Infantry Regiment appeared to be suffering the highest rate

of casualties. Many of the patients had been brought fifty or sixty miles in an ambulance after first aid treatment at the aid stations or clearing companies; for although the 48th Surgical Hospital was near Feriana, ahead of the 77th, it was unable to cope with the large numbers of casualties coming in. It appeared at first that the 77th should have been moved much closer to the front for this work, but when it was realized that the casualties coming from the northern part of the sector came down a road leading north out of Tebessa, it became clear that they would have had a much longer distance to travel than those from the southern sector if the 77th had moved farther forward. Fifty-six per cent of the cases on the medical service were cases of psychoneurosis due to the war. The heavy shelling, bombing, and strafing to which the soldiers had been subjected for long periods of time without rest was undoubtedly responsible for their mental breakdown, and the majority of them were in such a condition that the sound of an explosion in the distance or the noise of a plane passing over camp usually sent them into a frenzy of shaking and quivering that was pitiable to watch. After four or five days of nearly constant sleep under sedatives, many of them were well and ready to return to the battle, but others were more serious and had to be evacuated for further treatment. This was the first experience of the American Army in Africa with large numbers of such cases, and psychiatrists were sent to the 77th and 9th Evacuation Hospitals to study the cases and devise an effective treatment. In the rush of evacuating these cases from the busy aid stations near the front, occasional cases were sent back with the diagnosis of psychoneurosis which proved on examination to be some serious organic disease.

The officers and men frequently worked for as long as seventy-two hours in a stretch with only brief cat-naps for rest, and within a few days it became evident that the rush period would probably last longer than the personnel would be able to hold up under this strain. Consequently, separate day and night shifts of twelve hours each were organized, and although the circumstances necessitated working extra hours at times, the plan afforded some opportunity for the rest that is necessary if a doctor or a technician is to continue doing good work. A small number of men was obtained from the 51st Medical Battalion to help relieve the shortage of litter bearers, and they worked in the receiving and evacuation departments where the work was the heaviest. It was still necessary, however, for the surgical technicians to carry the majority of the patients to and from the operating rooms, and occasionally men from other departments had to be called out to help. On one of the darkest nights, two of the operating room technicians were taking a patient, still under an anesthetic, from the operating room to his ward and became lost in the blackout. Still blinded from the glare of the operating lights, they set the patient down on the ground and started back for a flashlight but became lost from both the patient and the operating room. After they had groped about in the dark for a while, worried about the patient, and shouting to one another, two of the surgeons who had heard their shouted conversation came out with a flashlight and the unconscious patient, no worse for the experience, was taken to his bed.

According to the plan devised at La Meskiana, the operating theater was set up in three storage tents, connected end to end so that the interior was one large room. Sheets

were hung up as a lining for the dark tent walls, reducing the amount of dust, and providing better reflection of light. There had been no apparatus in the organizational equipment for the proper application of plaster casts to patients with injuries involving the thigh, shoulder, or back, and although this difficulty had been partially remedied by building an improvised hip rest on the table, several extra assistants were required to make up for the deficiency in equipment. Capt. Paul Harrington and Sgt. Block, using materials from an ordnance salvage depot, constructed an improvised arrangement on a litter so that all types of plaster casts could be applied on the one piece of apparatus. Built on a litter frame, and easily portable, it would fit on any operating table.

The unit was visited at Tebessa by Col. Edward D. Churchill, chief consultant in chest surgery for the European Theater of Operations, and while there he performed a very difficult operation on a patient who had been wounded by a German "teller" mine and had suffered a fractured back and a traumatic rupture of the diaphragm, allowing the stomach and part of the intestines to be displaced into the left side of the chest. The operation was witnessed by as large a crowd as could be accommodated in the operating theater, and as all other work in the operating room stopped, the scene was reminiscent of the operating theater of a large medical school at home.

The evacuation plan of Capt. Tucker and Sgt. Gerlach operated very efficiently at this location, and was, in a large part, responsible for the hospital's ability to handle large numbers of patients rapidly and effectively. Evacuation by ambulance to Constantine was greatly augmented by air evacuation from the nearby airport at Youks les Bains, and by the use of stream-lined hospital trains which ran from Tebessa to Constantine. This was the unit's first experience in rail evacuation, and the rapidity with which the hospital could be nearly emptied of patients by this method made it seem very practical and attractive. The evacuation blanks which were being used had been found quite adequate for the registrar's records also, so that the procedure of sending complete medical records to the registrar was obviated and the necessary paper work connected with each case was reduced considerably. The evacuation department sent out a roster of the patients who would be evacuated in the next group, so that the ward personnel had ample time to have the patient dressed, medications given, or meals served before he was evacuated.

The weather during the eighteen-day period at Tebessa was quite varied, and since the day of movement into this area was mild and warm, no stoves were put in the living quarters. Within a few days, it turned rather cold again, and would have been somewhat uncomfortable had it not been for the fact that any time which could be taken off duty was spent in bed. The wood detail obtained fire wood from the quartermaster depot in Tebessa, and sawed and split it into stove lengths at the supply area. A strong, gusty wind blew through the area frequently, stirring up clouds of dust where the trucks and litter bearers had worn the grass off, and on one of the particularly windy nights many of the tents were torn or partly blown down, and the utilities department was kept busy for a few days repairing the damaged canvas. During the last few days, the sun shone down from a clear sky, there was little wind, and during the hot part of the day it was necessary to roll up the sides of the tents for ventilation.

The food remained about the same, corned beef hash for breakfast, meat and vegetable stew for lunch, and chili for supper, with canned spinach, dehydrated carrots, and vienna sausages sprinkled here and there in the menu. The canned preserved butter which had been the butter ration for all troops in North Africa was a product meant for tropical climates, and had a very high melting point. In the cold weather the unit had been experiencing, this axle grease type of butter was one of the chief objects of complaints about the food, and when available, the British oleomargarine was preferred since it had a better taste and did not stick to the roof of the mouth for hours after eating it. Fresh bread was obtained a few times, but for the most part, the hard-tack variety of cracker was still the standard bread ration. The cooks had learned that the crackers could be ground up into flour, and provided a means of serving breaded spam. Stories began to come in about other units having hot cakes made from ground cracker flour, and syrup made by dissolving the fruit drops of the C rations. There had still been no fresh meat since January, although one Sunday, the thrilling rumor of baked ham for dinner went around camp. This wild notion was received much as the other stories of Hitler's death, Turkey's entry into the war, and Norway's liberation which floated about periodically, and everyone was quite surprised to find that the ham was actually there at dinner time. Trading with the Arabs had been nearly impossible during most of the stay at Tebessa since no one had the time; but during the last few days several people took bags of dirty, torn, cast-off clothing which had been left by the patients and went into the market or along the roads and traded the rags for eggs. Used tea leaves were also found to be good trading material, and usually one could get a half-dozen eggs for a handful of them.

The low meadowland on which the camp was set was somewhat boggy on the east edge of camp, and the water table under all the ground was so high that latrines and soakage pits could only be dug to a depth of two or three feet before they filled up with water. This necessitated moving these installations frequently and increased the work of the sanitation department. Water supply, on the other hand, was much better than at La Meskiana.

The American Second Corps, which had been under the command of Maj. Gen. Freyendall, was now commanded by Maj. Gen. Patton, and an order appeared on the bulletin board threatening fines up to twenty-five dollars for the offense of not wearing the steel helmet at all times, or going without leggings. Since it was impossible for a doctor to get a stethoscope in his ears while wearing a helmet, and still worse to attempt to operate while wearing the helmet, the order had to be ignored inside the tents, but everyone wore his helmet in going from one tent to another. Since the helmet was still the standard vessel for washing and bathing, the process of taking it off, washing hands, drying the inside to prevent the excess wash water running down the back of the neck, putting the liner back inside it and putting it on again increased considerably the amount of time spent on these simple tasks.

A detachment from a special service unit in Constantine came through Tebessa one day with a movie projector and the film, *The Sea Hawk*. In spite of the fact that nearly everyone had seen the picture years before, they went to this showing in droves, and three times during the evening the officers' and nurses' mess hall was packed as the hos-

pital personnel and patients, deprived of movies for several months, stood up to see the picture. One Sunday afternoon shortly before the hospital closed, the dance band of an armored infantry regiment stopped at the hospital and played for the patients and personnel. The favorite



LISTENING TO THE VISITING DANCE BAND

of the troupe was "Tex," a gangling saxophone player who also played the villain in the comic presentation of melodrama enacted with sound effects and musical accompaniment from the orchestra. His lines in the scene when he was evicting the heroine and her aged father from the house for non-payment of rent, went something like, "Ef'n yo'all cain't pay the rent, Ah reckon Ah'm gonna haf tu put yo'all outen dis yere house," and were recited with a strong Texas drawl. It was a good band, and furnished a remarkable amount of amusement during the short time it played. Just before the 77th left Tebessa, a Special Service detachment opened a theater in the city and held one movie each evening for the troops in the area. Several truck loads of 77th people went into the theater one evening, and despite the frequent interruptions to patch the torn film, appreciated this diversion from camp life and the luxury of sitting down to see a movie.

During the few days slack period which always comes between the time the hospital closes and the time for moving, many who had not had a previous opportunity, visited

the Roman ruins at Tebessa. Church services were held in the ruins of the Basilica of St. Crispine by Chaplain Rideout, and were always well attended by members of all the units in the area. Held among the broken marble columns and finery of another age, these services were particularly impressive. The 77th's portable field organ, played by Lt. Elvira Peterson, furnished music for the worship.

By April 12, Rommel had been driven up into Tunisia above Sfax, and a firm junction between Montgomery's Eighth Army and the American Second Corps had been established. The strategy now called for the movement of all Second Corps troops to the northern Tunisia coast. This meant that the entire movement must cross the supply lines of the British First Army, and must do so in such a manner that the continuous flow of rations, ammunition, and gasoline would not be interrupted by jammed traffic on the already crowded roads. Several obscure roads through the mountains were used, and by careful planning and an intricate system of timing, the entire movement was completed without interference with vital supply lines of the British. One of the roads to the north passed by the 77th camp, and for several days and nights a constant stream of tanks, trucks, and half-tracks pounded by the hospital and disappeared over the rim of a distant hill. Morale ran high in all the troops at this time, and as the truck loads of soldiers passed the hospital, there was an interchange of banter and greetings. A chorus of expressive whistles always greeted the nurses when they were seen in the area by the passing troops. This was indeed a different setting than the last few days at Pine Ridge when the withdrawing troops streamed past the hospital, glum, cold, and considerably depressed, and brought to mind a portion of the radiogram Gen. Eisenhower had sent to Gen. Marshall during the period immediately following the Kasserine break-through:

"You would have been impressed could you have seen the magnificent display everywhere by the American enlisted men. I assure you that the troops that come out of this campaign are going to be battle-wise and tactically efficient."

The hospital was closed on April 12, and orders were received to move on the 14th.

MEDICINE UNDER CANVAS

ORAN CITY AND ORAN FIELD PROMOTIONS AND COMMISSIONS

NOVEMBER, 1942:

TO TECHNICIAN 5TH GRADE—Verner O. Lathrop.

DECEMBER, 1942:

TO CORPORAL—Carl W. Hensel.

TO TECHNICIAN 5TH GRADE—James C. Howard, William J. Maggary, Charles C. Major, George J. Meeker, Elmer E. Rue, and Edwin W. Shaffer.

TO PRIVATE FIRST CLASS—Lamon W. Bethune, Gordon W. Gratias, Jason B. Kesselring, and Kenneth F. Smith.

TO MAJOR—Martin F. Anderson, M.C.

TO CAPTAIN—Robert L. Newman and John Rideout.

JANUARY, 1943:

TO TECHNICIAN 3RD GRADE—Robert M. Aberl, Warren F. Bauer, Keith H. Gibbs, and Melvin G. Streckfuss.

TO TECHNICIAN 4TH GRADE—Clifford G. Everson, Herbert M. Fritzsche, Ashpy Hedger, Ed W. Lambert, James L. Partin, and Rudolph G. Wolff.

TO CORPORAL—William R. Frye, John R. Gullledge, Thomas J. O'Neil, Gus W. Wagonlander, and Jack D. Woody.

TO TECHNICIAN 5TH GRADE—Frank H. Anderson, Charles E. Camp, Clarence G. Christian, Russell O. Peetz, and George K. Peterson.

JOINED THE UNIT

NOVEMBER, 1942:

Pvt. Albert Vasconcellos and Pvt. David A. White.

DECEMBER, 1942:

Capt. Cornelius A. Mahoney, M.C.

LEFT THE UNIT

DECEMBER, 1942

Lt. Edward J. Keeny, M.C. to 62nd C.A.A.A.; Pvt. Joseph W. Leonard to hospital.

JANUARY, 1943:

2nd Lt. Mary E. Howard, A.N.C., and T/5 Arthur A. Hanneke to hospital.

TEBESSA I PROMOTIONS AND COMMISSIONS

FEBRUARY, 1943:

TO LT. COL.—Mahlon H. Delp.

TO TECHNICIAN 4TH GRADE—Mervin G. Lockwood and William J. Stackpool.

JOINED THE UNIT

FEBRUARY, 1943:

Pfc. Raymond Pead.

LA MESKIANA PROMOTIONS AND COMMISSIONS

MARCH, 1943:

TO 2ND LT. MAC.—Benjamin D. Ramaley, William L. Davis and Ellsworth A. Fredericks.

TO TECHNICIAN 4TH GRADE—Joseph A. Kohut and Thurman J. Richardson.

TO TECHNICIAN 5TH GRADE—Gordon W. Gratias, Daniel C. Koenn and Salvatore Trapani.

JOINED THE UNIT

MARCH, 1943:

Natalie Gould, A.R.C., and Pfc. Louis Scaturro.

LEFT THE UNIT

FEBRUARY, 1943:

1st Lt. Crosby W. Alley, M.A.C., to the 1st Armd. Division.

MARCH, 1943:

Lt. Col. Mahlon H. Delp, M.C., to the States, and 2nd Lt. Dorcas F. Smith to hospital.

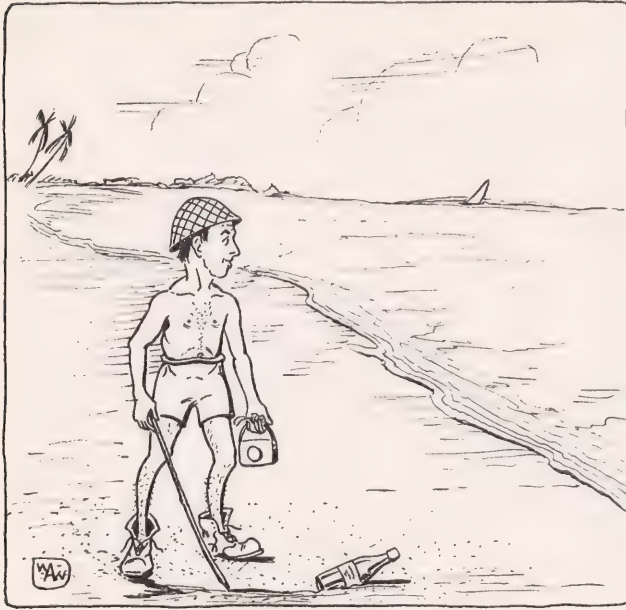
JOINED THE UNIT

MARCH, 1943:

Capt. Albert Steffens, Catholic chaplain.

APRIL, 1943:

Mary G. Sternbergh, A.R.C., and Cpl. Martin A. Huff, Jr.



Chapter IV

THE advance detail left immediately on April 13 to locate a suitable site near Bone, on the Mediterranean coast, and make the necessary preparations for the main body. On April 15, shortly after daylight, the trucks arrived for the move and by nine-thirty in the morning were loaded and the convoy was ready to leave. The trucks were driven by colored soldiers who seemed to take great pride in being able to drive the big vehicles about like toy doll-buggies, and who thoroughly enjoyed their jobs from all appearances. The 77th was leaving a site where it had worked hard and had done a good job. The satisfaction of this knowledge, coupled with the prospect of moving out of this desolate, barren country into the more fertile Mediterranean coastal area gave a big lift to the general morale of the group. The recent successes of the British and American forces; the anticipation of an early end to the African campaign; and still closer at hand, the approach of warm weather, all served to blot out the memories of sleeping in the mud at Oran and freezing in the snow-covered pup tents of Pine Ridge.

As the convoy pulled out of the area and began to stretch itself down the road, the horde of Arabs who had formed a cordon about the camp as the first signs of packing became evident, rushed into the area and began to fight over such coveted treasures as tin cans, remnants of clothing, and scraps of food. Even the garbage disposal pits which had been filled in with dirt did not escape this treasure hunt, and within a few minutes the entire area was seething and swarming.

As the convoy left Tebessa, the rolling wastelands to the north and west gradually gave way to green hills, fertile uplands and rugged mountains. The inhabitants became less ragged, appeared better nourished, and their dwellings more substantial. Large flocks of sheep and goats were seen in fertile valleys between the mountains. The descent from the mountains into the warmer coastal country was even a greater change, and as the convoy passed through the area around Guelma, the highways were lined by large

eucalyptus and palm trees and the agricultural scene began to change from the grazing lands of the mountains to vineyards, olive groves, and citrous orchards. As the convoy passed the famous hot springs near Guelma, a group of nude people were bathing in the pools and streams. At first glance the bathers appeared to be natives, but when cries of, "Hi-ya, Joe!" with a Brooklyn accent were thrown at the convoy, it was evident that these were American soldiers enjoying their first warm bath in months. Wisteria and bougainvillea covered the stone walls and houses, and geraniums, madonna lilies, and lilacs filled the gardens with masses of color. The orange groves were in full blossom, their fragrance filling the warm air as the trucks passed along through the late afternoon sunshine, but this aroma was always abruptly changed when the convoy entered one of the squalid villages with its filthy streets and mixture of odors. In the fields near the towns and villages were neat gardens, already beginning to show their crops of vegetables, and in the untilled land near springs or streams, wild gladiolas and poppies grew in abundance. Just at dusk, the convoy pulled off the main highway into the new hospital area, a field of foot-high clover two miles east of Morris, and twenty miles from Bone. The advance detail extended their greetings in the most gracious manner possible by leading the way to food and sleeping tents. Enough ward tents had been erected to accommodate everyone until the smaller living quarters tents arrived in the main convoy. Large swarms of starving mosquitoes joined in the greeting, and gave every evidence of thoroughly enjoying this new crop of human flesh. Chow finished and mess kits washed, the new arrivals were in the process of preparing their beds for the night when a brilliant display of fireworks appeared in the western sky. The Luftwaffe was staging one of its many raids on the harbor and city of Bone and it appeared as though all the anti-aircraft facilities of the entire American and British armies were expressing their resentment of the intrusion. Streams of tracer bullets floated into the sky and disappeared with a final sparkle; larger flashes momentarily lit up the sky as the forty and ninety millimeter guns tracked their diving and zooming targets; and occasionally a huge flash from the ground was followed by a mass of brilliant streaks as the rocket gunners let go at the attackers. This harbor was one of the hardest hit spots in all North Africa and had been bombed several times daily during the earlier part of the campaign.

The clover patch which the hospital occupied was surrounded by grain fields already knee high with ripening wheat and barley. A thousand yards to the rear of the camp across a narrow slough of stagnant water, the sandy loam rose gradually into a row of sloping hills, their sides dotted with the dwellings and cactus-fenced corrals of the natives, and their crests sparsely covered with olive and oak trees. The main highway which ran past the front of the camp was accompanied by a somewhat rusty narrow gauge railroad running from Bone up the coast to Bizerte and Tunis. Seventy-five yards to the east of the camp a detachment of British soldiers was erecting the few buildings and barbed-wire fences of a prisoner-of-war camp. Three and one-half miles to the north was the Mediterranean with its sloping beaches of white sand.

The hospital was set up rapidly from the beginning the advance detail had made, and within twenty-four hours was ready for operation. As at Tebessa, the headquarters,

receiving, evacuation, mess, and supply sections were erected in a central area with the supply department at the rear of camp; the medical wards to the left; the operating ward and surgical wards to the right; and the living quarters for officers, nurses, and men at the fringes of camp to the right and left. The nurses were quartered in small wall tents, the officers and men in pyramidal. The entrance from the main road led into a wide "main street" running across the front of the camp from which other roads led between the rows of tents. In the open area between the highway and main street the large red cross for air recognition was laid out. The 51st Medical Battalion arrived within a few days, and one company of ambulances established headquarters in the field across the highway. Five hundred yards to the east of them was an ammunition dump, its neat stacks of high explosive shells stretching over acre after acre.

Again the movement plans had worked out so well that there had been very little confusion and the entire camp was set up with practically no complaining from the mess hall generals who infest every army unit and always know a better way to do things.

The first patients began to arrive on April 16, and although three other evacuation hospitals, the 11th, 15th, and 9th, were stationed much nearer the front than the 77th, the 11th and 15th were experiencing their first work in the field and consequently required several days to organize their equipment and begin operations. During this period, the 77th received quite a number of patients who



PRISONERS OF WAR MARCHING FROM THE DOCKS
TO THEIR CAMP

had made the long trip from the sector east of Beja by ambulance. The two hospitals in operation had screened out the more severe cases for immediate treatment and had sent the others directly back to the 77th. As the 9th and 48th hospitals began to overflow, seriously wounded patients who had already been treated began to come in; and within a few more days patients from the 11th and 15th were admitted.

The attack and subsequent capture of Hill 609 resulted in serious casualties and cost many American lives, as the American II Corps, now under the command of Maj. Gen. Omar N. Bradley, stormed across upper Tunisia, squeezing the enemy into a tight pocket around Bizerte, Tunis, and the Cape Bon Peninsula. The casualties from these

advances poured back through the chain of evacuation and nearly all of them passed through the 77th. The majority of the patients had already received the necessary treatment, but a few were fresh casualties, and many of them required considerable treatment. The Tobruk splint for fractures of the femur was still being used by some of the other hospitals, and many of them had to be removed and hip spica casts applied in their place since the Tobruk splint had been found to be unsatisfactory for transportation of the patient for long distances. This required as much or more work than a fresh casualty and frequently the patient was in very poor general condition. Many needed blood transfusions badly and the officers and men of the unit were again used as donors, some of them giving their fourth or fifth transfusion since landing in Africa.

Hill 609 was captured; the First Armored Division took Mateur; Medjez-el-Bab fell; and on May 6 the American forces began the drive into Bizerte and Tunis. The combined American and British air forces had been studying minutely the lines of air and sea communications of the enemy between Sicily and North Africa, and now began a twenty-four bombing service aimed at these vital escape routes for the Nazis, sinking their ships, and shooting down their huge "flying box-cars." Rommel had escaped to the European mainland and was reported in conferences with Hitler, but on May 13, Von Arnim and nearly all his staff were captured; and news came that the enemy had surrendered and the African campaign was over.

The hospital continued to function, but by the latter part of May nearly all the casualties from the final battles had filtered back through the funnel, and had been evacuated or returned to duty. The 77th had treated a total of 4,577 patients in the forty-five days of active operation at this site. Evacuation from the 77th at Bone took place by air, sea, and land. Some of the patients went overland in ambulances to Constantine, others were taken to the airport at le Tarf from where they were flown to Oran, and still others were loaded on hospital ships at Bone for evacuation to Oran or to England. This was the first experience with loading hospital ships and usually the British 5th General Hospital, situated two miles from the 77th, furnished half the patients for a ship load. British ambulances were used at times, and within a few days Capt. Tucker and Sgt. Gerlach had an opportunity to explain their plan of evacuation to the British hospital's evacuation staff. The patients from the 77th were always ready, the ambulances were loaded with a minimum of delay, and this half of the job was always finished in only a fraction of the time required at the British hospital. Drivers from the American ambulance units which serviced the 77th were spreading the news that here was a hospital which could handle incoming patients rapidly and in large groups as well as load a convoy of ambulances for evacuation at the appointed time and with little lost motion. Furthermore, a driver could always get a meal here and was treated with considerably more courtesy and respect than at some of the other hospitals. All these advantages of a closely-knit organization were obvious to drivers, weary of having to wait to load or unload their ambulances, but they had failed to see the greatest advantage of the evacuation plan and the chief factor in inciting its creation. That is, the fact that the patient remained in one ward with one doctor, and yet his diagnosis, condition, and evacuation status was at the fingertips of the evacuation department at all times.

The unit was inspected by Brig. Gen. Hugh Morgan, M.C., and Lt. Col. Fuller Albright, M.C., both of whom were quite interested in the cases of vitamin deficiency in the American soldiers which the 77th had seen, and could not understand how this could develop even in combat soldiers. Fully acquainted with the protein, carbohydrate, fat, mineral, and vitamin content of the C ration, Gen. Morgan did not know that after weeks and weeks of this food, the soldiers were unable to eat the allotted three cans per day. A can of meat and vegetable stew was procured, opened and offered the General as he sat discussing the nutritive value of this canned food. He ate slightly more than half the can and stated that he thought this a very convenient, nutritious, and tasty product. Lunch time came and the general passed through the line accepting his portion of the usual bill of fare, meat and vegetable stew. Those who sat near him noted that he ate only a small portion of his lunch and immediately retired to his quarters. During the remainder of the day, the subject of rations was tactfully ignored, but it was felt that the General had been impressed.

The morale of the unit had been high during the working period at Bone, and the news of victory in Africa lifted it even higher. Wagers of the entire European war's end by January first, 1944 were made by some of the optimists, but the more realistic personalities looked ahead to Sicily, Italy, and the continent as difficult objectives and covered the wagers. The hospital remained open until June 25, but

the citizens of Bone and the surrounding area who turned out for the event with considerable enthusiasm.

From the time of arrival at Morris, mosquitoes were so thick that they were sometimes seen in clouds over the stagnant water in the slough at the back of camp which provided an excellent breeding place for the pests. Immediate measures for mosquito control were instituted, and on



77TH NURSES IN THE VICTORY PARADE AT BONE

after the first of June there were rarely as many as ten admissions per day and a large part of the tentage and equipment was taken down and packed.

On May 16, a Victory Parade was staged in the city of Bone, representative groups from nearly all the units in the area taking part in the event. The 77th was well represented by its nurses who were the only feminine members of the Allied forces marching in formation and they received the lion's share of all the applause of the spectators,



BRITISH SOLDIERS IN THE VICTORY PARADE

April 18, mosquito nets were issued to each member of the command and all hospital beds were equipped with them. On April 21, routine malaria-suppressive treatment was begun, and each member of the command took two tablets of atabrine on each of two days in the week. At dusk, the sides of all the wards were rolled down, the doors fastened, and the entire ward sprayed with an insecticide. A mosquito net was put up on each bed and the patient instructed to keep under it. This made examination and treatment of the patients more difficult, and required extra time and effort on the part of the ward personnel who were responsible for putting up and removing the nets. The sanitation detail spent several hours each day spraying all the standing water about the camp with oil to keep down the mosquito menace, and were able to eradicate some of these ponds by drainage. In spite of all the precautions, several members of the command developed malaria but with the prompt treatment which could be instituted, their attacks were relatively light. Within a few weeks everyone began to turn yellow from the atabrine, and since nearly all were becoming tanned by the hot sun, the combination of colors was quite striking. Along the highway near the hospital site, the II Corps Sanitary Section erected signs reading, "Do Not Bivouac. Hyper-endemic Malaria Area." As more new cases developed, the atabrine dosage was increased to one tablet daily.

The prison camp next to the hospital covered thirty acres, and during the latter part of the campaign contained thousands of German and Italian prisoners. The sanitation in the camp was very poor; their latrines were of the open bucket type or more frequently only open slit trenches, and with the warm weather came myriads of flies and with the flies, dysentery. The majority of cases in the 77th were only mild, non-specific cases, but two rather severe cases of bacillary dysentery developed among the personnel of the unit, and nearly every person in the command had several attacks of diarrhea of some sort during the summer. The sanitation detail was doing everything in its power to control the fly situation, but with such a fertile source in the nearby prison camp, their efforts could not completely control the situation. Aside from their work at mosquito control, they arranged a garbage collection schedule three times each day, so that this source of fly breeding would be completely eradicated. Latrines in the hospital area were sprayed with oil and insecticide daily, and the boxes scrubbed with lysol solution. Probably the thing which contributed more toward control of the diarrhea was the screening of the mess tents. Repeated efforts were made to follow out the directives of various higher headquarters in the matter, but while they all recommended that mess halls and kitchens be tightly screened with a screen of certain mesh, there seemed to be no wire screen in all of North Africa; and finally the mess and kitchen tents were screened with mosquito nets which were torn apart, made into a screen, and hung on wooden frames. A double flap of the material was hung across the doors to prevent flies entering there. Within forty-eight hours the incidence of new cases of diarrhea had fallen by fifty per cent and continued to decline. Another factor which probably played a large part in decreasing the diarrhea was revision of the mess kit washing system. Up until this time, it was not permissible to use gasoline for heating the wash water for mess gear, and the thirty-two gallon cans of water were heated over wood fires. Frequently the water was not hot enough, and the mess kits were not properly sterilized in the process of washing. Authority to use gasoline for this purpose was obtained, and gasoline burners were made from salvage material at an ordnance depot. By this more effective method of heating and by changing the water frequently, the washing process was improved considerably. Although many people in the unit were not particularly impressed with the necessity of all these precautions at the beginning of summer, after they had had several attacks of diarrhea and had taken large amounts of sulfaguanidine, they became more interested in the problem and gave its solution their full cooperation.

Along the edge of the highway in front of the camp was an eighteen-inch water pipe which ran from Bone to several of the outlying towns, and when the line had been tapped and a large outlet attached, the camp was assured of a ready supply of fresh, soft water. A three thousand gallon collapsible tank was set up on a platform at the east end of main street, and served as a chlorination and storage tank. A shower unit was constructed near the storage tank, and as the weather became warmer it was the most popular place in camp. Three or four showers a day became a habit with many, and frequently the showers were kept busy from early morning until long after taps. The shower became widely known among other units in the vicinity and was always well-patronized by visitors,

several hundred of whom sought its comforts nearly every day. For the first time in the unit's experience in Africa, fresh water was not a scarcity and could be used freely. It was not surprising, of course, that the unit was issued a new 750-gallon tank truck at this time, its acute need having passed.

On June 17, His Royal Highness, King George VI of England visited Bone and inspected British and American units in the area. Troops of the two nations lined both



TROOPS AWAITING THE ARRIVAL OF KING GEORGE VI

sides of the highway for several miles south of Bone as the king and his entourage passed by in armored cars. Several camera enthusiasts were prepared to record the event photographically, but when it was learned that each man was to stand rigidly at attention and salute as the king passed, hopes for a good picture fell, and only one rather blurred picture of the king's car was obtained by manipulation of a small camera in the left hand of a saluting officer.

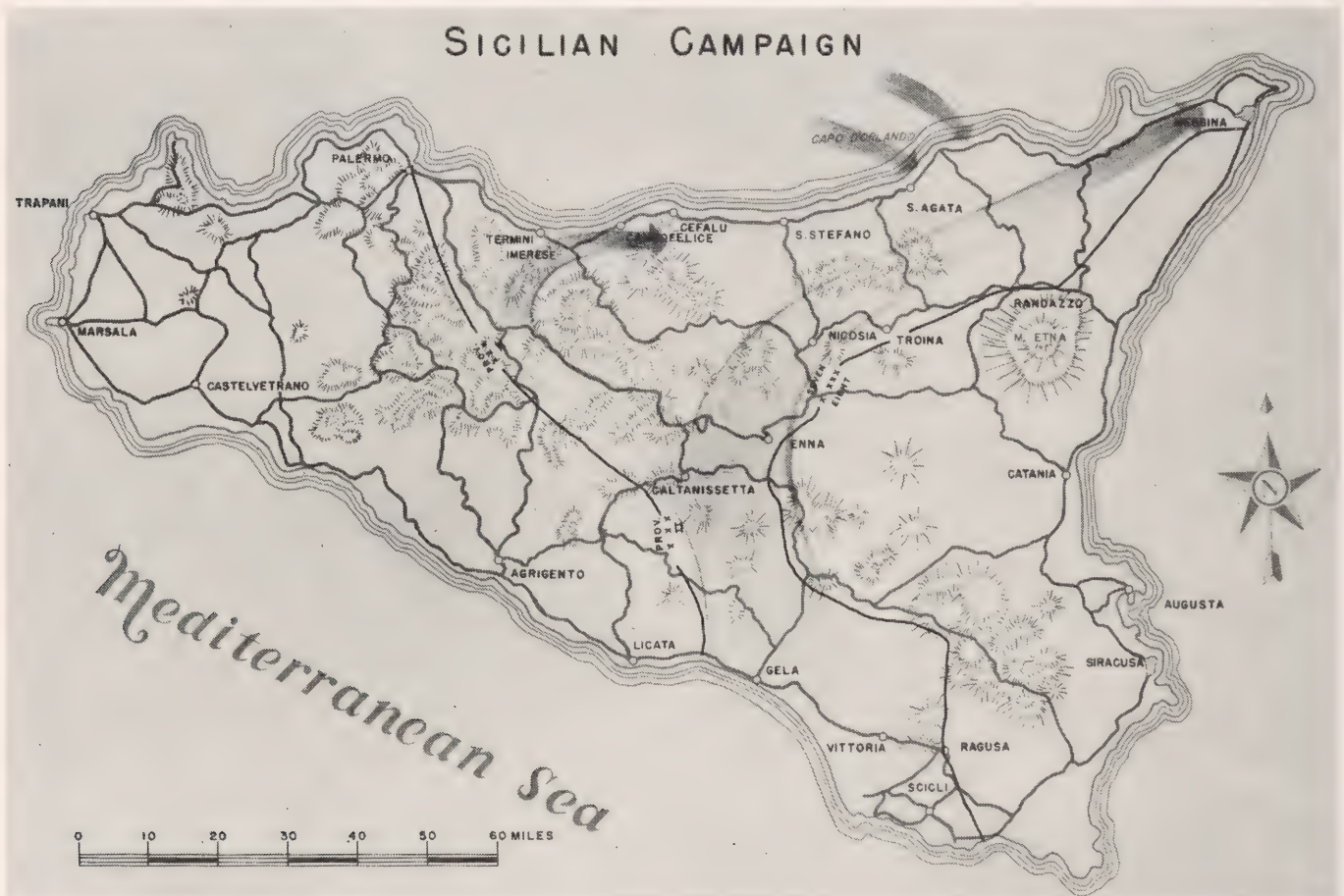
On June 15 the unit was alerted for a move, and the general consensus of opinion was that the 77th was to take an active part in the invasion of Sicily. No further orders came, however, until the latter part of June, when eleven officers and fifty-four enlisted men were ordered to report to the naval commandant at Bizerte. This detachment, commanded by Maj. Martin F. Anderson, left camp in a truck convoy on June 29, 1943, and traveled over hot, rough and dusty roads still under repair by German prisoners, past many of the battlefields of recent months to the war torn city of Bizerte where they began their detached service with the United States Navy. The nature of the assignment was unknown by any of the group, and the first forty-eight hours were spent idling about the quarters in one of the huge hangars of the French air field that fronted the harbor of Bizerte. The harbor itself was now filled with all manner of naval craft. The hangars had been repeatedly bombed by American planes during the German occupation, and had taken considerable damage, and now almost every evening the city and harbor were raided by the Luftwaffe. The rumors and conjectures which always accompany such a period of leisure came to an end on July 1, when Maj. Anderson conferred with the naval commandant and brought back the report that a team consisting of one officer and four men was to be assigned to each of eight LST's (Landing Ship Tanks), that nine men were to accompany medical officers of the 91st Evacuation Hospital on other LST's, two officers and eight

men were to serve at the naval medical base at Bizerte, and one officer and ten men were to equip and operate a one hundred bed hospital and assist at the naval hospital at La Goulette, the port of the city of Tunis.

On July 2, the designated officers and men went by truck to the harbor at La Goulette where they boarded their assigned ships. Each ship was notified of the arrival of its attached medical personnel by blinker signal and sent a small boat to ferry them out to the ship. After their duffel had been hoisted aboard the men scrambled over the side on landing nets, reported to the ship's skipper and were assigned quarters. The next few days, up until mid-afternoon of the 8th of July, were spent inspecting the ship; planning for the loading and care of casualties; obtaining medical supplies and equipment; outlining a standard operative procedure for any type of situation; and getting acquainted with the ship and its crew. Medical officers and men of the combat units who were traveling on the ships were given assignments to battle stations about the ship.

On the afternoon of July 8, the convoy of forty-five ships got under way, sailed northeast out of the bay of Tunis, and set a course for the island of Malta. On July 9, the prevalent rumor that this force was bound for Sicily was dramatically given official confirmation by Gen. Patton's stirring battle orders announced over the loudspeakers, naming the point of the assault landing as Gela, Sicily. The weather, which had been fair, roughened as the islands of Malta and Gozo were approached and rapidly developed

into a gale. After sighting the islands, the fleet turned northward and made rendezvous with a fleet of LCI's (Landing Craft Infantry) which had been seen at a distance earlier in the day. Many of the soldiers and even some of the ship's crew were seasick, and the rails and scuppers were crowded. General quarters sounded at eleven o'clock in the evening, and shortly after midnight, landfall was reached at the Bay of Gela. Action was joined almost at once, as planes roared overhead and ship-to-shore and counter fire began. Several powerful searchlights flashed on. One from a commanding point of land was particularly obnoxious until extinguished by shells from the cruisers and destroyers which had wheeled into position behind the landing craft. The town of Gela caught fire and burned continuously throughout the night. Seaward from the anchored landing craft, transports, and Liberty Ships which came in during the night, the escort ships steamed back and forth, pounding the shore with their guns while the larger battle ships stood farther off shore and threw their large caliber projectiles at the shore installations with uncanny accuracy. This was an amazing sight, as the big shells, bright orange against the night sky, arched lazily through the air and floated down on the target with a blaze of flame followed several seconds later by a thundering crash. All through the rest of the night this sort of activity kept up while the landing craft pitched and rolled at anchor increasing the misery of those who were seasick, and at dawn a heavy surf was running as the initial wave of LCVP's, LCI's, and "ducks" went into the beaches. Many of the smaller vessels capsized on the beach.



At eight-thirty in the morning, LST 338, the flagship, was beached after unshipping its pontoons and getting them in place at the prow. An unforeseen obstacle in the form of a sand reef about one hundred yards from the shore made the landings more difficult, but a short time later one LST went in with enough speed to slide over the bar. Both ships came under immediate artillery fire from what was believed to be the famous German "88's," and although the barrage was fairly heavy, it was not very accurate and soon they were silenced by Allied dive-bombers summoned by radio. LST's 308 and 337 also landed the first morning, and 325, 345, and 313 landed after noon. All the ships were subjected to intermittent low level bombing and strafing attacks by German planes which came in low from behind the sand dunes and attacked the beaches and vessels with such speed and surprise that practically no warning could be given. LST 325 was hit by a dud bomb which wrecked a jeep; jeep and bomb were thrown overboard with no further damage. LST 313 with Capt. Cornelius Mahoney and his men aboard, received a direct hit, the bomb exploding in the tank deck and setting fire to the ship, vehicles, and the magazine. T/5 Harry Hoover was blown overboard by the blast, but suffered relatively minor injury from the experience. From a distance, the burning ship appeared like a huge Roman candle, belching clouds of flame and smoke and sending up cascades of tracer shells. One hundred and eight casualties resulted immediately, many of them deaths, and all the casualties who could be reached by T/5 Fay Toney, T/5 James Cox, and Pvt. David Gibson, together with the other uninjured corpsmen, were carried aft to the sick bay. As first aid measures were being administered to the wounded, the ship was strafed again and the ship's captain issued the order to abandon ship. The casualties were moved to the poop deck and the entire ship was again canvassed for casualties under the direction of Capt. Mahoney. LST 311 closed in at the stern of the stricken ship with pontoons lowered and made fast so that the seriously wounded could be lowered away while the walking wounded made their way down the ship's ladder to the pontoons. This accomplished, Capt. Mahoney and his men again went back to the burning ship to search for any casualties which might have been previously missed, and consequently were the last to leave the ship before returning to carry out further treatment of casualties on the rescue ship.

Apparently tactical surprise to the enemy was achieved for the important few hours needed in the initial landings on Sicily, and the operation was not as costly as had been expected. Many of the pillboxes and other fixed defenses were unmanned, and some of the mine fields were well marked and labeled. Scouts and rangers had gone ashore in small boats during the night and had marked the beach into sections with colored bunting strung between poles so that there was a "red" beach, a "green" beach, a "yellow" beach and so on. These men were, in the eyes of many, the real heroes of the offensive and continued to work at directing the incoming traffic after the landings had begun. Small bulldozers skirted up and down, building roads over the sand dunes as soon as an area of beach had been cleared by the infantry making a way for the ducks and other vehicles as they came ashore.

The night of July 10 was relatively peaceful, but the following day brought high and low level bombing attacks which succeeded in hitting two Liberty Ships, setting fire

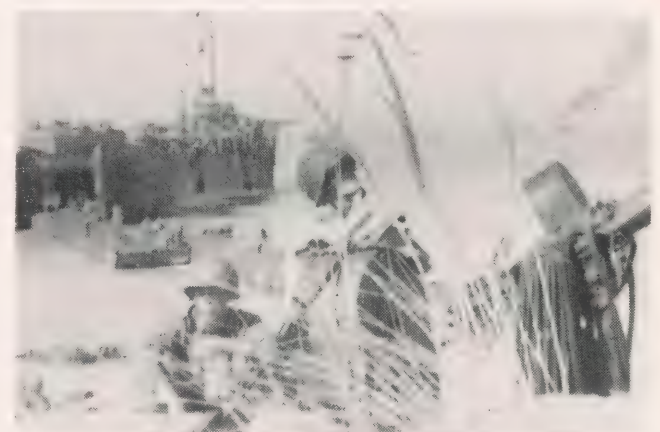
to one of them, and the bay was darkened by the black pall of smoke from the burning petroleum. The next night was memorable for its bombing attacks under magnesium flares, producing a feeling of nakedness among the men on the decks of the brightly illuminated ships. Many of the ships were rocked by near misses, but no hits were reported; flak fell on the decks like hail. An organized counter attack supported by tanks was launched by the enemy on July 12, and during the fierce fighting, the landing forces were thrown back, threatening the beaches in some places. The major encounter between Allied and enemy tanks took place well within view of the ships in



TROOPS LAND FROM LST

the bay, and as the cruisers and destroyers entered the battle with their deadly accurate fire, the enemy was repulsed.

On July 12, the convoy reformed and began the return voyage to la Goulette where the patients were discharged, a new cargo of men and equipment taken aboard and the ship's stores replenished. During the action of the landings, the 77th personnel had treated thirty-five casualties in addition to those from the sunken LST, and in spite of the fact that this was their first taste of action and that they had never received combat training, all the 77th men



BEACHHEAD, SICILY

were well composed under fire, discharging their duties efficiently and in keeping with the best traditions of the medical department. In addition to their assigned duties the men volunteered as lookouts for the gun crews, as sick bay and pharmacy attendants, as KP's, as interphone operators, and as mess attendants, conducting themselves in a very commendable manner entirely above reproach.

The second trip, starting on July 15, was made without two of the original group of LST's, the sunken ship of Capt. Mahoney and his men, and LST 345 which was laid up for repair of a ramp knocked off in the landing of July 10. This trip was made in calm weather and the course was laid directly for Gela. No action was seen on this trip, but the first large-scale unloading of supplies and equipment by ducks was one of the most interesting features of the trip. These ingenious amphibious vehicles



BEACHHEAD ESTABLISHED

swam out to the LST's, drove directly up the ramps into the ships, were loaded, drove back down the ramp, swam ashore, drove up the road on the beach to the stock pile, where they were unloaded, and began another trip. This method of unloading the LST's proved more efficient than even the most optimistic estimates. The convoy returned to the "hards" at la Goulette on July 19, and made the third trip, completely uneventful, between July 21 and 25. The 77th men in the Tunis area were released and returned to Bizerte on July 27, and the entire detachment was relieved by the navy and returned to the camp at Morris by truck on July 29.

Following is the roster of officers and men who took part in the Sicily invasion together with their assignments: LST 325: Maj. Martin F. Anderson, Sgt. Herbert Eldridge, T/4 Martin I. Hoskins, T/5 Rollin V. Jerome, and Pfc. George A. Jarvis; LST 313: Capt. Cornelius A. Mahoney, T/5 Fay Toney, Pfc. David E. Gibson, T/5 James L. Cox, and T/5 Harry M. Hoover; LST 308: Capt. Robert W. Forsythe, S/Sgt. Warren F. Bauer, T/5 Wm. F. Kunze, T/5 Eugene T. Gooch, and Pfc. Lawrence A. Cogburn; LST 345: Capt. Glenn C. Franklin, T/4 Alton Allen, T/4 Arthur L. Fincannon, T/5 Reed Cox, and Pfc. James Fox; LST 344: Capt. Norman A. Gale, T/Sgt. James L. Sale, T/4 Ed W. Lambert, T/4 Charles W. Vicarrio, and T/5 Harold E. Sherrill; LST 338: Capt. Carl M. Porter, Cpl. Jack Woody, T/5 Kenneth Hubbard, Pfc. William S. Rountree, and Pvt. Tom Smith; LST 337: Capt. Nihil K. Venis, Cpl. Gus Waggonlander, T/5 Leo M. Beck, Pfc. Harlan H. Doody, and Pfc. Doyle B. Crosston; LST 340: Cpl. Frank Anderson; LST 4: Pfc. Adolph Wild and Pvt. Harold Martin; LST 380: Lester Grossman; LST 2: Pvt. George Shaw; LST 371: T/5 James Burkett; LST 307: T/5 George Harden; LST 381: Cpl. Donald Locklear; LST 369: Pvt. T. J. Mooneyham. Assigned to the U. S. Naval Base at Bizerte were: Capt. Paul R. Harrington, Capt. Paul E. Bennett, T/3 Kenneth McConnell, T/5 Clarence Christian, Pvt. Elroy Talley, T/5 William King, S/Sgt. Her-

bert Chadwick, T/4 Kenneth Michael, Pvt. Edwin Parker, and Pfc. Charles Johnson. Assigned to the U. S. Naval Base at La Goulette were Capt. Melvin A. Rabe, T/5 Ches-



NURSES "RIGHT DRESS"

ter Brownd, Pfc. Samuel L. Parrish, Pvt. John P. Honeycutt, T/5 Franklin Dee, Pvt. William Sherwood, and Cpl. Clarence L. Sindt, where they operated a 100-bed hospital. Also at La Goulette were Capt. Nathaniel B. Soderberg, Sgt. James E. Crowe, T/5 John L. Russ, T/5 Lee Schloredt, and T/5 Oscar Nelson who worked as a plastic surgery team at the naval hospital.

Although no formal celebration was held at the return of the detachment to camp, a great deal of relief was felt by the entire group on seeing these men return without serious casualty, and in many a casual greeting and hand-



ENLISTED MEN MARCHING ON THE FIELD

shake was a silent prayer of thanksgiving as friends and buddies were reunited.

During the remainder of the stay at Morris, there was little to do in the way of operating a hospital, and the majority of effort was spent in recreation. A training program consisting of close order drill and road marches several mornings each week was instituted in order to comply with the directives of higher headquarters, but otherwise there were few duties. Many were content to spend the long hot days in the comparative comfort of their tents where they were at least shaded from the sun. The attire

of the group became quite informal to say the least, and as little clothing as possible seemed to be the order of the day. One was expected to be fully clothed in the mess tents and on duty, but in the area of the living quarters a pair of shoes and a pair of khaki trunks or swimming trunks constituted an adequate costume. A complete uniform was required on visiting Bone or any of the other surrounding towns, and this meant the wearing of a woolen uniform by the men since no issue of cotton uniforms had been made.

Pleasant respite from the heat could always be obtained by going to one of the beaches in the vicinity, and two or three trucks made daily trips all during the summer. The



CLOTHING WAS AN UNNECESSARY ITEM

enlisted men usually went to a beach on the west side of the city of Bone, where a resort was located in a small cove. A number of homes had been built here by the French citizens, and a large clubhouse of the peace-time resort provided dressing rooms. The azure sea, protected from the winds was usually quite calm, and always provided a welcome sight on the hot afternoons. The beach was usually crowded with American and British soldiers and French civilians. The manner in which the French women changed from their bathing suits to their street clothing without bothering to seek the privacy of the club house was



A FLY USED FOR PROTECTION FROM THE SUN

a startling revelation to the American soldiers who were accustomed to more discreet manners, but did not decrease attendance at the beach.

A number of small craft including British minesweepers were frequently anchored in the cove, and as the men became more proficient swimmers they would swim out to

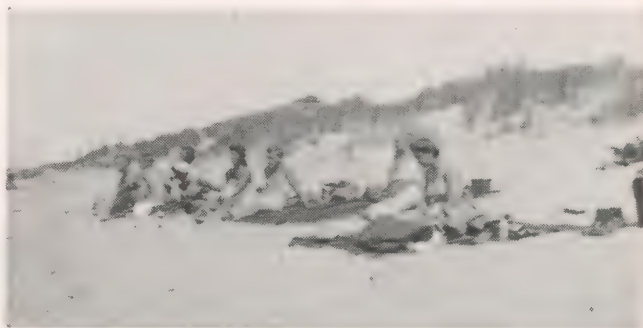
these ships. On one afternoon when Capt. Harrington was in charge of the group, several swimmers had not returned from a trawler at the appointed time of departure, and he swam out to the ship to get them. They had accepted an invitation to come aboard for tea, but had also



RELAXING ON THE MEDITERRANEAN BEACH

been offered rum, gin, and scotch, and had become so engrossed in the hospitality of their gracious hosts that they had forgotten to notice the time. All were able to swim back without assistance, and were eyed with considerable envy by their buddies.

The officers and nurses used a beach some six or eight miles from camp, and the daily truck which left shortly after lunch and returned in time for evening mess was always crowded. At this particular stretch of beach there were frequently waves of sufficient size to permit surf riding, and following the lead of Capt. Glenn Franklin, the



OFFICERS AND NURSES ON THE BEACH

sport of riding the waves on an inflated mattress cover became very popular. The large canvas covers which were actually a sack open on one end could be soaked thoroughly in the water and inflated by holding the open end to the wind or running along the beach with the end held open. After the sack was filled with air the end could be tied shut and the resulting sack of air used as a giant waterwing. By walking out into the surf as far as possible, the swimmer had only to wait for a good wave, catch it just as it began to break, jump up on the inflated sack and he was carried in and deposited high and dry on the beach. This required a certain amount of skill, and a novice was nearly certain to be thrown over the sack and his head

dashed into the sandy ocean floor a few times before he mastered the technique. These "float sacks" could be used for an entire afternoon without re-inflating if kept wet. A year or so later, *Life* carried a write-up with pictures of soldiers riding the surf on mattress covers on some beach in the South Pacific and gave them credit for originating



ARROW POINTS TO INFLATED "FLOAT SACK"

the idea, but the 77th swimmers have always felt that Capt. Franklin was the father of the idea.

On several Sundays, the beachcombers began their day early in the morning and stayed all day, cooking their meals of chicken or steak over driftwood fires on the beach. Nearly everyone became more or less proficient in the culinary arts in a crude fashion, and by the end of summer could dress and cook a chicken. These fowls, of dubious breed, could always be obtained from the Arabs for an approximate price of two dollars, and the traffic in chickens became so heavy that a community chicken coop was maintained by Sgt. Jason Kesselring at the motor pool. This

was a co-operative affair, and purchases of chickens were paid into the coop and a credit of that number of chickens established. Water and feed was furnished by Kesselring until such time as the depositor came back to claim some of his birds for consumption. The chicken fries were usually held in small groups in the camp, on top of the hill a thousand yards behind the camp or at the beach. These feasts, embellished with bread from the mess hall, tomatoes and melons from the Arabs were always a treat and furnished a welcome variety from the



BUYING CHICKENS FROM THE NATIVES

monotony of C rations or vienna sausages at the mess hall. Steaks could be purchased at the butcher shops in Bone which displayed a large picture of a cow on one window and a horse on the other. Either type of meat could be

obtained, although at times beef was difficult to find. There can be little doubt that some of the meat sold as "bif-tek" was actually horse meat, and that it was never recognized as such. It is rumored that on one occasion Capt. Robert Menees invited several people to a steak fry at the beach



CHICKENS, EGGS AND GRAPES FOR THE FEAST

and included in his invitations some who had openly expressed an abhorance of eating horse meat. It is said that the steaks were delicious and were enjoyed so much by everyone present that Capt. Menees could not find the courage to tell them it was horse meat they had eaten.

The habits and customs of the Arabs living in the vicinity were always of interest to the Americans, and a few of the



PREPARING CHICKENS FOR THE FRY

unit members became well-acquainted with some of the natives and even visited in their homes, a procedure of questionable prudence in view of the typhus fever, malaria, and other diseases common among the Arabs. Such social events as marriages, deaths, births, and festive Moham-medan occasions were often heralded by the booming of drums and the wailing of voices even far into the night.

The procedure of wooing and taking a wife is essentially a business venture. A young swain on acquiring his majority and sufficient funds for bargaining, starts his romance by traveling through the hills to see what is avail-



TYPICAL ARAB WEDDING PROCESSION

able at a price he can afford. Any man who has daughters of desirable age (fourteen to eighteen years) brings them out, exhibits them to the prospective groom, extolls their virtues, and states his asking price. If the young man finds one to his liking he makes an offer, and the bargaining begins. An average price of the equivalent of two hundred to four hundred dollars is finally agreed upon, and arrangements for the wedding are made. The ceremonial begins with a night and day of feasting and celebration at the bride's home. The groom is absent from the festivities and the bride spends most of the time squatting in a corner with her face to the wall. As evening of the second day approaches, a wedding processional is made to a relative's home where the feasting continues through the second night. At some time near noon of the next day, the groom makes his first appearance on the scene, and toward evening a final procession conveys the bride and groom to the groom's house where the wedding is consummated and by nightfall the new couple are finally left alone in their love-nest together with whatever wives and children the groom may already have.

One evening an Arab wedding procession passed the camp and furnished an excellent view of the bridal entourage. The procession was led by a sort of "drum-major"

who capered and pranced about in much the same manner as his American counterpart at a collegiate football game. Following him walked the members of the musical section, composed of a drum and a double-reed woodwind instrument quite similar in tone quality to an oboe. The drummer alternately beat the drum with a more or less conventional type drum stick and a wooden switch, the resulting "boomp-swish" combination producing a haunting rhythm which continued to beat in the listener's ears long after the procession had passed. The "flutist" had mastered a technic of blowing out his cheeks like the bag of Scottish bag-pipes so that the resulting din was a constant wailing repetition of rapid scales and phrases, all in a minor key, and uninterrupted by the process of taking a fresh breath. A few other men who walked in the van of the procession joined the general hullabaloo at intervals with a wailing chant of high-pitched, nasal voices. The bride, resplendent in a white sheet which covered her completely and afforded only a small slit for one eye, rode along with her father in a small cart drawn by a burrow. Several other carts, occupied mainly by men, a few riders on horses and burrows, and a handful of people on foot made up the remainder of the procession. All were dressed in their gayest colors, but with the exception of the capering drum major, the entire company wore very solemn countenances.

The Mohammedan law of the Koran provides that a man may have only four wives—at a time. He may, however, divorce any of his wives at will, simply by handing her a writ of divorce. If he is a man of some wealth, he may acquire almost any number of wives during a lifetime and since such a man usually allows his divorced wives and their children to remain in his harem, his household may acquire huge proportions. Due chiefly to economical factors, the Arabs in the territory visited by the 77th were, for the most part, monogamous, or at least had only one wife in the household at a time. If a wife proved to be unworthy of her purchase price, such unworthiness manifested by inability to work the fields, provide food, or bear sons, she might be divorced and turned out, in which case she



WOMEN WORKING IN THE FIELDS

had no alternative than to return to her father's house where she lived in disrepute, since a used wife could hope to bring no more than fifty or seventy-five dollars at re-sale if she could be sold at all.

The women and older children worked all day in the fields, tilling the soil, harvesting the crops, carrying the

water, and doing all sorts of manual labor. Frequently, the men worked also, but in many instances they appeared to occupy their time by idling about the village market-places. If a man chooses, he may chain or beat his wife, or subject her to any sort of treatment he desires. An Arab woman's life is, in some instances, almost without value, although in many cases it appeared that man and wife were living together with a considerable degree of mutual regard and affection.

Agricultural instruments in general were very crude. Wooden plows, drawn by oxen were commonly seen, the grain was reaped by scythe or cradle-scythe, and threshing was accomplished on a threshing floor by means of driving oxen or horses around and around over the harvested grain on an area of hard ground until the straw and chaff had been blown away leaving the grain. Many of the colonial French and a few of the native farmers boasted such machinery as tractors and binders which varied in vintage from the earliest type of Deering reapers to the most modern equipment.

One day just before harvest when the grain was ripe and the fields dry, fire broke out in one of the wheat fields behind camp and the farmer attracted the attention of some of the 77th men. Any activity of this sort was always welcome in the inactive camp, and soon nearly the entire population, armed with shovels, barracks bags, and buckets had rallied to the cry of "fire" and was beating and stamping out the rapidly spreading flames. When the fire was nearly under control, one hero drove wildly out to the scene in a weapons carrier pulling a water trailer. The shouts of approval for this volunteer smoke-eater soon died, however, when the trailer was found to be empty.

In the effort to build up that portion of the training program under the heading of "organized athletics," a few activities which were not too well organized crept into the written program. Baseball, volley ball, horseshoe pitching, swimming and tennis all appeared with a certain number of allotted hours each week, crowding the items of "road march" and "close order drill" into the minimum requirements of time. No coercion was necessary to make the baseball program a success, and soon an organized softball league made up of eight teams from the various departments was in effect with a game nearly every evening. Teams representing the medical department, surgical wards, operating room, supply, mess, sanitation, headquar-

ters, and an officers' team made up the league, and the first games were played in a rough field, but under the direction of Maj. Harless, the services of an engineer unit's grader were obtained and a well leveled field was laid out. A



SGT. HITCHCOCK IS SAFE ON A THROW TO SGT. RUSSELL

daily grooming including dragging and sprinkling kept the field in good condition and fielding errors and alibis were greatly reduced. No materials were available for building a grandstand, and the crowd which attended each game ranged itself along the base lines on boxes or blankets. Attendance was always good, and in addition to the members of the unit, the games attracted all manner of people from the surrounding territory.

A keen spirit of rivalry developed, and the officers, nurses, and men from each department were always on hand to cheer their own team and boo the opponents. Notably lacking were pop bottles to throw at the umpires, and vendors of peanuts and hot dogs, but in their place were the Arabs who came with fruit and melons to sell, and a bunch of grapes became standard equipment for a baseball fan. A few Arabs apparently developed a genuine interest in the game, and some of them were regular attenders. Even small convoys passing along the road occasionally stopped to watch the games, and many of the British soldiers in the vicinity became ardent fans of this American sport. Their modest remarks of "Bravo" or "Well done" at the beginning of the season gradually gave



FAMILIAR SCENES IN AFRICA

way to more Americanized remarks, and before the summer was over, they could call an umpire a robber in true Brooklyn fashion. Although they asked innumerable questions about the various plays and rules at first, they grasped even the finer points of the game rather quickly, and it was amusing to hear one Tommy explaining some technicality to one of his more unenlightened buddies. A group of the British guards from the nearby prisoner of war enclosure decided that there was nothing really very difficult about the game and challenged one of the better teams of the league to a game. The resulting foray was about what could be expected, and probably little different from what one might anticipate from a cricket game between the same teams.

The league teams completed two complete round robins of play, the headquarters and evacuation team winning the first round, and the medical department team the second. For the headquarters team, S/Sgt. Nelson Ziesemer and S/Sgt. Henry Smith did the pitching, and were caught by T/5 Edward Olwell. T/4 George Hitchcock and Sgt. Merle Dickerson did the pitching for the medical department, while Pfc. Lacey Pittman did the catching. The official score keeper for the games was T/4 Paul Tackett, and the umpires were T/4 James L. Partin, T/5 George Harden, and T/4 Ken McConnell.

Aside from the intramural softball league, two softball teams and one baseball team were organized to represent the unit against other organizations. The baseball team became an outstanding club, perhaps the best in the vicinity, and finished the season with only two losses. The team usually took the field with the following line-up: Pitchers, Pvt. George Shaw, Pvt. James Davis, and T/4 Joe Skoda; catchers: Pvt. Walter Holawski and Pvt. Ollie Jones; infielders: T/3 Warren Bauer, 1st Sgt. Alvin Kendall, Pvt. R. J. England, T/5 George Meeker, and Sgt. Lincoln Coffee; outfielders: T/4 James Cover, Sgt. Edward Ryan, Pfc. Hubert Cranford, Pvt. Sid McDonald, and Sgt. Arthur Girty. The team was managed by S/Sgt. Henry Smith, and the coaches were Sgt. Arthur Zimmers and T/5 Robert Buchholtz. The opening baseball game of the season was played one Sunday afternoon in the stadium at Bone against the 450th Engineers. The game had been well advertised among the British and American troops in the area, and a large crowd was on hand to spend a truly American afternoon in a foreign clime. In addition to the British troops, quite a number of French civilians attended the game, and for the benefit of these people a public address system had been set up and a detailed explanation of each play was given. Between innings, the announcers read commercials advertising those delicious and nourishing C rations which could be obtained by any American soldier merely by walking to the mess tent three times a day. The crowd was also told how they could obtain a can of spam by sending in only one hundred C ration can lids.

In the intramural games numerous fingers were broken, particularly on the officers' team, and the only casualty of any consequence occurred when Pvt. Walter Chappell dislocated his shoulder.

The longest game of the season came when the officers' team, in an unusual spurt of brilliant play against the league-leading medical wards, lasted fourteen innings before being defeated. This was the officers' greatest threat of the season, and they finished each round of play with an untarnished record of seven defeats and no victories.

Early in the season, the surgical ward's team made a dazzling surprise appearance on the field with neatly stenciled hospital "ducks" (urinals) on their shirts. The pitching battle of the season occurred one evening when Pvt. John Snyder took the mound for the surgical wards against Capt. Howard Dukes for the officers. Both pitchers were worn down to submission and were sent to the showers by their managers after a track meet performance of only three innings. Only one player finished the season with a



OFFICERS' SOFT BALL TEAM

batting average of 1.000% ; Lt. Col. James B. Weaver, in two trips to the plate, had one walk, and one hit for the perfect record.

The 77th baseball team made several road trips, at times staying as long as three days, and it was on one of these trips that they suffered their worst defeat, meted out by the crack team of the 26th General Hospital. Included in their itinerary were Constantine, Phillipville, la Calle, and Tabarka, as well as numerous Sunday afternoon games in the stadium at Bone.

There were many impromptu volley ball games, and even in this sport outside teams were played on several occasions. Horseshoes were always a popular pastime, and at nearly any time of day the clang of shoes could be heard from the courts. A few members were able to arrange for the use of tennis equipment at the tennis club in Bone and played there on several occasions.

Pvt. John Snyder became interested in boxing during the summer, and under the tutelage of Sgt. Lloyd Douthit as trainer, began an extensive training program including road work, shadow-boxing, sparring, rope-skipping, etc. Several amusing bouts of doubtful authenticity were held between "Killer" Snyder and T/5 Thomas Russell. Maj. Rumold made some excellent colored movies of the final bout.

Under the able direction of T/5 Harlan Kesterson, and with the help of Lt. Erma Mace, Capt. Howard Dukes, and Maj. Wayne Bartlett, a rather imposing array of theatrical talent was assembled from the unit and a Variety Show organized. With Capt. Dukes as master of ceremonies, the show was made up of several specialty numbers, vocal and instrumental music, and boasted both a male and a mixed chorus. With the pantomime assistance of Ashpy Hedger, Leon Johnson, and others, Joe Early recited *The Face On the Bar Room Floor* amid an appropriate stage

MEDICINE UNDER CANVAS

setting of a Klondike saloon. T/4 James K. Meadows presented a very torrid imitation of Carmen Miranda, and it was difficult to realize that the perpetrator of such supple anatomical gyrations was actually a GI in a G-string. Kesterson sang several selections from *Show Boat*, Capt. Dukes sang *You Can't Yell Yoo-Hoo or Hi-Babe Anymore* and *There's a Helmet On My Saddle*. A very clever musical number entitled *Don't Tell My Daddy That You Kissed Me* with Capt. Dukes and Lt. Mace in kindergarten costume was one of the show's features. Other numbers included a vocal solo, *Yours* by Lt. Marion Cross, a harmonica solo by S/Sgt. Rodney Heinen, an original poetic recitation by



AN ACTION SHOT OF "KILLER" SNYDER

T/5 Robert Dowdy, several numbers by a hill-billy band composed of Seelen, Heinen, Klepfel, Sherwood, and Starr. Lt. Marie Paik and T/4 Lilburn Lay were featured in a duet, *Indian Love Call*, Laurence Maney presented several piano selections, and the chorus sang several numbers including a medley of *Over There*, *Smiles*, and *K-K-K-Katy*. *When It's Springtime Back Home*, an original composition by Donald Nicksch, proved to be one of the most popular chorus numbers.

The show was presented first to the members of the 77th, and later, by request, to the British 5th General Hospital, at a theatre in Tabarka, and later made its final appearance on board the *Amarapoor*. It was a good show, and the enthusiasm with which it was received at each performance was a tribute to the originality and versatility of its composers and performers.

Occasional movies were presented by Special Service units which came along with a projector and films. The movies were shown out-of-doors and so were frequently interrupted by rainstorms or air raids. This imparted a sense of mystery on many occasions when the show was halted at a crucial point in the plot and the audience was left to conjecture as to the outcome. One performance by a British swing band was well received, and a troupe of colored GI singers presented a varied program of spirituals, popular numbers, and several operatic arias by a very accomplished tenor soloist.

One Sunday afternoon, the Marshall Petain Stadium at Bone was packed by a crowd eager to see and hear a Bob Hope performance. After waiting several hours, it was announced that the troupe would be unable to get there that day. A week later the show actually took place, and proved to be as good as anticipated. The usual hilarious

repartee of Hope and Tony Romero kept the crowd in a continuous uproar, and the appearance of Frances Langford in slacks and bra with exposed midriff brought forth a roar which must have been heard in Cape Town.



AUDIENCE AT BOB HOPE SHOW

Not to be outdone by their captors, the Italians and Germans incarcerated in the nearby-by compound developed a show of their own and came up with a troupe which boasted several professional performers. 77th members were invited to one of their shows by the British military personnel of the compound and the group which attended



BOB HOPE AND FRANCES LANGFORD

was considerably impressed by the talent. One violinist had been a professor of music in Florence, and another was a composer and played several of his own compositions for the violin. An accordion player had been a professional musician and was especially good. Musical background for several numbers was furnished by an eight-piece orchestra garbed in costumes improvised from discarded sacks; the actors presented a few dramatic sketches and operatic numbers. During the performance, an artist went about through the crowd drawing remarkable clever caricatures of members of the audience.

The prison compound itself amounted to little but a tract of land divided into smaller pens by high barbed-wire fences. Strategic placement of searchlights and guard stations reduced the necessary number of guards to a minimum so that the number of British personnel assigned to

the camp was quite small. Several small wooden buildings housed the guards, and the only other structures in the entire camp consisted of two or three tents to house prisoners who were ill. The turn-over was very rapid in the camp at times, large numbers being loaded on boats at Bone for shipment to Oran or to the United States in returning cargo ships. The Italians derived great amusement from taunting the Americans with, "We go United States—you only go Italy. Ha, Ha."

The Luftwaffe's raids on the harbor of Bone continued with decreasing frequency throughout most of the summer, and the fortunes of each foray were followed closely by spectators in both the 77th camp and in the prison compound. When the anti-aircraft batteries found their mark and sent one of the raiders down in flames, the American personnel raised their voices in shouts of praise and encouragement, but when a bomb hit a ship or a shore installation, the moans of the Allied cheering section were drowned out by the shouts of the prisoners. The result was not unlike the sounds emitting from a college football stadium.

In tracking the raiders as they left the target area and circled over the hospital area and out to sea, the ninety

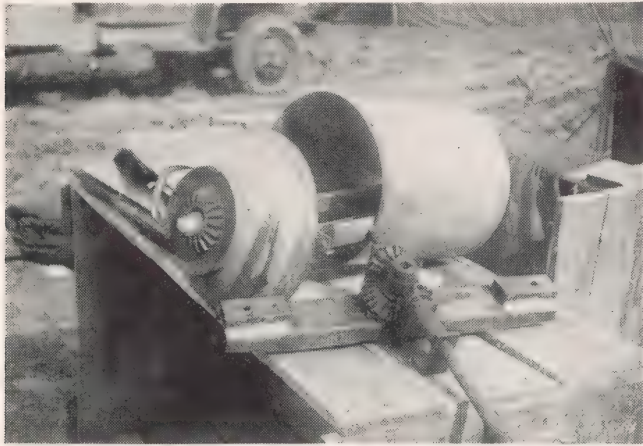
mm. guns occasionally sent a shell over the hospital, and a few ground bursts occurred near the area. On one occasion, the British 5th General Hospital received a direct hit by one of the stray shells with several deaths and casualties. During one of the raids, a flaming German plane fell into the bivouac area of a colored quartermaster company and resulted in twenty-one deaths and as many other casualties, most of them severe burns.

The unused energies resulting from the lack of professional duties was the father, and necessity the mother of several crude but ingenious inventions at Morris. Maj. Harless had combined a corrugated GI can, several pieces of a folding cot, a bearing from the ventilating fan of a wrecked tank, and several other odds and ends into a hand operated washing machine of remarkable efficiency. In slightly over an hour, four men could turn out their week's laundry with this ingenious machine by taking "turns" at the push-pull handle, and there was very little of the washday backache so common in American households equipped with electrical conveniences. Another of Inventor Harless's masterpieces was an ice cream freezer. Constructed from discarded airplane parts with the aid of the machinery and tools of an ordnance depot, the freezer was



WASH DAY

operated by a hand crank, and by means of an intricate system of gears the can rotated in one direction and the paddle dasher in the opposite direction. Ice could be



THE "HARLESS" FREEZER, PATENT PENDING

obtained in Bone, and the ingredients for the ice cream mix were assembled by hoarding canned milk, sugar, and powdered eggs from the mess supplies. Enough ice cream could be made in one batch to supply the entire enlisted men's mess. One of life's greater tragedies befell Johnnie Wooten of the enlisted men's mess force one day when he turned the crank for an entire hot afternoon and then worked his usual shift at serving the evening meal. When he had finished his work, he approached the freezer with mess kit in hand, his face a picture of anticipation. The mental shock to which he was subjected on finding the can empty must have been horrible.

On August 2, there was a party for the enlisted men in observance of their activation date. The nurses took over such duties as cook, dishwasher and waiter while the of-



THE STAFF OF "RITZ CAFE 77"

ficers walked guard, hauled the water and garbage, and performed the other necessary details. The noon meal of fresh butchered beef and vegetable salad was not served until two o'clock in the afternoon. The enlisted men delighted in the reprieve but every officer and nurse was glad when the day ended.

One of the most amusing attempts at handicraft which

took place was the construction of a small boat, the *S. S. Latrine*, by Maj. Harless and Capt. Lalich. The finished product, built of scrap lumber, salvage cot parts, and old canvas, varied somewhat from the original plans due to lack of material, and when it was launched in the Mediterranean amid considerable ceremony before a group of skeptical onlookers, it promptly shipped water at the stern



THE POTS AND PANS CREW

and sank with its creators to the hilarious roars of the crowd. Maj. Rumold recorded the entire event on movie film beginning with the christening and ending with a picture of Capt. Lalich's hat floating on the water's surface where the boat had gone down.

The village of Morris which lay two miles west of camp on the highway to Bone afforded a market within walking distance. Typically native in most aspects, the village shops were ranged along the highway and consisted of the customary stalls of vendors. How the town came to inherit such an occidental name could never be ascertained. Here was a convenient chicken, egg, and vegetable market, and some even ate the dates for sale there until they saw the merchant unpack a new supply from the container, a goat's skin. The sticky fruit was crowded into every nook and cranny of the hide, into the neck and head, and down into the legs. The native version of the hot-dog stand, the charcoal brazier with its skewers of roasting meat was universally shunned by the Americans and even the odors arising from these roasting tid-bits of lung, liver, kidney and other unidentified sources was enough to deter all but the native customer.

In the center of the town square was a fountain with watering trough where came an unending parade of housewives from the surrounding territory with their earthenware water jars and goat skin water bags. Some had donkeys to carry the burden, but many carried the heavy jars filled with six or eight gallons of water on their twisted backs by means of a head sling. As time went by, such scenes as these became the commonplace, and a Buick sedan of any model after 1930 commanded much more attention from the Americans and natives alike.

Meanwhile, as the 77th enjoyed its mid-summer vacation on beach and baseball field, and awaited the call to more ardent duties, the battle for Sicily went on with continued Allied victories and by August 16 the entire island was in Allied hands. The next day, August 17, 1943,

marked the first shuttle raid of heavy bombers from England, when a large group of Flying Fortresses hit Nazi fighter-plane factories in Regensburg and flew south across the Alps and the Mediterranean to American bases in North Africa. Ripped and torn by the intensive resistance of German anti-aircraft batteries and fighters, many of these



ARAB HOUSEWIVES AT THE WATERING TROUGH

planes were dangerously low on gasoline and sought refuge at any landing strip available. For several hours, they limped through the evening sky at low altitude and many landed at the British air field a few miles from camp. Control of the landings from the field control tower was virtually impossible since many of the planes were actually running out of gasoline on the approach to and over the field. A few even fell into the sea near the beaches. Some of the planes contained wounded and dead and these were the first fresh casualties the 77th had received in nearly three months.

The city of Bone could be reached easily from the camp at Morris by thumbing a ride on one of the many army trucks which passed the camp each day or by riding the



HORSE-DRAWN FIACRE

mail or ration trucks. On several occasions small groups would flag down the small, wheezing railroad train and ride into Bone on one of its flat cars. The shops, stores and cafes of the city were always crowded with American soldiers, eager to spend their money for almost anything. Trinkets, costume jewelry, perfumes, and small articles of clothing were purchased, at exorbitant prices for souve-

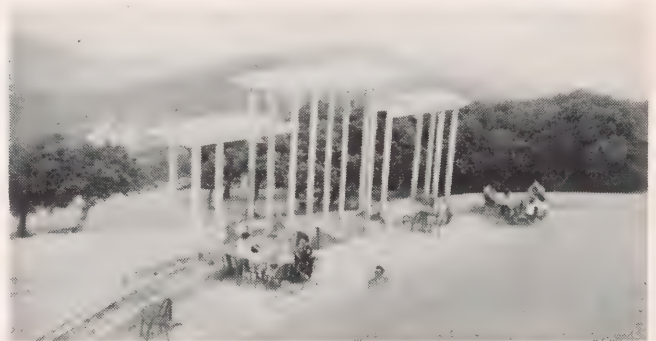
nirs or gifts to be sent to friends or families at home. The lack of any opportunity to spend money on such things during the months at Tebessa and la Meskiana made for a brisk trade, and the merchants, immediately alert to the inflationary situation, raised their prices accordingly. Of the several cafes in the city, the most popular with the Americans were the Cafe at the *Hotel D'Orient* on the main boulevard, and one on a back street which did not seem to have a name but was more likely to have "bif-teks" on the menu. It was considered a bargain, indeed, to be able to



THE CASINO AT BUGEAUD

purchase a dinner consisting of a small piece of steak, some squash, a fresh salad, and some dark French bread for two dollars. The more observant soldiers and especially those who understood spoken French soon discovered that the civilian population ate the same bill of fare at a cost about one-fourth the price to Americans; but the knowledge of this discrimination did not distract from the glamour of any meal with fresh meat which was served to one while he sat down and did not require the washing of mess gear. The back-street cafe kept open after the others had closed and always had on hand an unlimited supply of wine and cognac, and this was by far the favorite night-spot of the Americans.

Situated about 20 miles northwest of the hospital site was the small resort town of Bugeaud. This resort was



THE MOUNTAINS FROM THE CASINO VERANDA

atop a mountain overlooking the Mediterranean. The facilities for entertainment included tennis courts, gardens, dining rooms and a ball room.

There has been some damage to the business district of Bone by the numerous air-raids, but much of it was by

small bombs and the debris was hastily cleaned up and removed. The fronts of many of the shops had been protected by blast walls and even though the majority of these structures were never of value for their intended purpose, the Arab population made good use of them as latrines. The usual continental type of street latrine was in evidence, and the fact that many of their metal walls had long since rusted away and offered no obstruction to the view of passers-by did not impair their popularity and usefulness.

One of the city's barber shops was operated by a Frenchman who had spent several years in Detroit as a barber and also as a purveyor of alcoholic beverages during the period of prohibition. As a result of an altercation with the Detroit authorities it had been necessary for him to leave the United States and he had come to Bone. He still had a warm spot in his heart for all Americans, and he displayed this affection by always insisting that an American customer be taken ahead of all others in the shop, regardless of rank or civilian status. This proved to be somewhat disconcerting to British officers on several occasions but made his three-chair shop the favorite of the Americans.

The municipal market was one of the most attractive buildings in the city, and its three floors were divided into stalls where one could buy a wide variety of commodities and luxuries. Constructed almost entirely of masonry and steel, its exterior as well as the walls, floors and ceilings of its interior gave evidence of a harmonious combination of the engineering skill of the French colonials and the oriental art and craftsmanship of the native workmen. The filth and squalor in many of the stalls and the complete lack of cleanliness on the part of the vendors of foodstuffs could only dim the underlying architectural beauty of the mosaic patterns in the tile floors and walls. Only a few of the butcher shops on the lower floor were open since meat was very scarce, and frequently only horse meat and mutton were offered. Other shops included ice cream parlors and tea shops where individual blending of bulk quantities of tea was carried out. Leather goods, metal wares, and vegetables and fruits were displayed in many of the stalls, and in one, an especially clean one, was the "factory of strange odors" where one could be seated in an atmosphere of scents from all over the world and he was tempted with samples of perfume—attar of roses and ambergus, musk and incense, violet and orange flower, jasmine and lily of the valley. Sacks and jars of dried flower petals and leaves of aromatic plants stood about in disarray. The price of these luxuries was almost prohibitive, and very little American money went into the perfume merchant's coffers. Notably lacking among the vegetable displays were potatoes, but nearly every other type of vegetable was available. Native jewelry, chiefly hammered coin-silver articles, was on display here and there, but were difficult to obtain since the merchant usually demanded payment in silver coin from which he could produce more jewelry, and soon after the arrival of the Americans, the market was flooded with imitation silver rings, bracelets, etc., poorly made from a cheap metal.

Bone is one of the large wine export centers of North Africa, and there were numerous brasseries (breweries) in operation. The wine was handled in huge kegs which held from three hundred to five hundred gallons, and one

keg was a full load for a four-wheeled wagon used exclusively for the purpose of hauling the kegs to the docks.



FRONT VIEW OF
THE BASILICA

On cursory inspection, one of these horse-drawn wagons when loaded gave the appearance of a water wagon of some type. Special equipment for the rapid handling of the kegs made up a large part of the port's mechanical facilities.

The Basilica of St. Augustine is a magnificent shrine of twin steeples which stands on a hill just to the south of the city of Bone at the site of the ancient city of Hippo. The body of St. Augustine was originally buried at Hippo in 430 A.D., but nearly seventy years later was removed to Sardinia when North Africa was ravaged by the barbarians. Here it remained until the eighth century when the Moslems again swarmed over North Africa and invaded Sardinia. The remains were pur-



THE BASILICA OF ST. AUGUSTINE

chased from the invaders for their weight in gold and removed to Italy. When North Africa once again became the territory of a Christian power in the 19th century, the first Bishop of Algeria received from the Pope in the year

1842 a bone from the arm of the saint and this relic came to rest in the new Basilica, construction of which was begun in 1841 and finished in 1900.

On August 28, 1943, the Solemnity of St. Augustine of Hippo was held at the Basilica and many of both Catholic and Protestant faiths were privileged to attend the cere-



INTERIOR OF THE BASILICA

mony. Other masses at the Basilica had been attended by 77th members who were quite disappointed to find so small an altar in such a magnificent church. The regular altar had been removed to avoid damage in air raids.

On August 20, 1943, Col. Burnet was relieved of command and left immediately to become the Atlantic Base Surgeon. Time did not permit any sort of farewell party, and the man who had commanded the 77th so well during its first year of overseas service was gone almost before the news of his transfer had spread over the camp. Command of the hospital was assumed by Lt. Col. Weaver, the ranking officer.

BONE PROMOTIONS AND COMMISSIONS

APRIL, 1943:

TO 2ND LT. M.A.C.—William J. Walsh.

MAY, 1943:

TO TECHNICIAN 3RD GRADE—Earl L. Hoard.

TO TECHNICIAN 4TH GRADE—James E. Cover, Robert J. Gerlach, Leo J. Jensen, George R. Law, Maurice M. McQuiddy, Robert N. Moore, George K. Peterson, and Ben R. Tanner.

TO CORPORAL—Jason B. Kesselring.

TO TECHNICIAN 5TH GRADE—William I. Alford, Harry W. Benfield, Howard E. Clute, Genedah L. Elliott, Eugene T. Gooch, John T. Greco, Wilbur H. Gum, George M. Haire, Kenneth C. Hubbard, Leon P. Johnson, Earl J. Lair, Ford H. McParland, Thomas C. Oakes, Harold E. Sherrill, and Henry Turnbull.

JULY, 1943:

TO CAPTAIN—George L. Ashley, Glenn C. Franklin, Melvin A. Rabe, and Gordon S. Voorhees.

AUGUST, 1943:

TO CAPTAIN—Robert W. Forsythe, Norman A. Gale, and James E. McConchie.

TO TECHNICIAN 4TH GRADE—John M. Dzurny.

TO TECHNICIAN 5TH GRADE—Joseph R. Flanders and Ira M. Williams.

SEPTEMBER, 1943:

TO MASTER SERGEANT—Nelson W. Ziesemer.

TO CORPORAL—Eugene T. Gooch, William J. King, Vernon C. Starr and James M. Mease.

TO TECHNICIAN 5TH GRADE—Lawrence A. Cogburn, Lester I. Grossman, George A. Harden, Lloyd Hartman, Edward A. Ollwell, and Harlan H. Woody.

JOINED THE UNIT

APRIL, 1943:

2nd Lt. Grace M. Bave, H.D., and 2nd Lts. Mary A. Gogel, Marjorie N. Hart and Thelma M. Keough.

MAY, 1943:

1st Lt. John Bayle, Q.M.C.

JUNE, 1943:

Capt. John McGowan, M.C.

JULY, 1943:

Pfc. Elwin M. Brown, Pfc. Jessie D. Coker, Pfc. Matthew A. Cullen, Pfc. James M. Davis, Pfc. Gerald E. Gevock, Pvt. Howard Klein, Pvt. Henry H. Kent, Pfc. Sidney McDonald, Pvt. Leo A. Morin, and Pvt. Marcel Miguez.

AUGUST, 1943:

Capt. Morris F. Birely, M.C.

LEFT THE UNIT

APRIL, 1943:

Pvt. James T. Parnell to hospital.

MAY, 1943:

Capt. Clarence E. Palmer, Q.M.C., to E.B.S. Natousa, and 2nd Lt. William Walsh, M.A.C., to 51st Medical Battalion; Pvt. Hughie J. Brewer, Pvt. Moton Burks and Pvt. Roy Hendrix to Hospital.

JUNE, 1943:

Maj. Howard E. Snyder, M.C., to II Corps. Hdqs.; Capt. Francis A. Carmichael, M.C., 2nd Lt. Lenora M. Critchfield and Pvt. Roy R. Bustle to hospital.

JULY, 1943:

2nd Lt. Randall O. Thompson, M.A.C., to hospital, and T/5 Richard Lane to 2137 Q.M. Base Depot.

AUGUST, 1943:

Col. Burgh S. Burnet, M.C., to A.B.S.; 2nd Lt. Kate L. Swift, A.N.C., Pfc. Wayland Crawford, Pvt. Freeman Davis, Pvt. Henry E. Greenleif, and Pvt. Collie K. Stogner to hospital.



Chapter V

ON August 28, 1943, the orders which had been awaited almost daily since early June finally arrived and plans were made for a move to Sicily. The movement was to be made in two sections; the personnel to go by hospital ship, and the equipment by freighter. This news was received with mingled emotions, since the prospect of a comfortable trip for the personnel was offset by the knowledge that the equipment would suffer considerable loss by such a shipment. Inasmuch as many items of very useful and a few of essential value to the unit were not included in the *Table of Equipment* for evacuation hospitals and had been acquired from many sources and by diverse methods, the thought of losing them at a time when they could not be replaced was not cheerful. Indeed, on the heels of the movement orders came an infantry officer with credentials to show that he was an inspector. Wholly ignorant of the problems of a field-type hospital in operation, he knew only that he was to inspect the equipment and compare it with the official tables and throw aside anything which was not on the list. Some of the smaller items of unauthorized equipment could be hidden among the officers' and men's personal effects and thus escape being thrown aside. In this manner, the sterilizing drums, without which there could have been no sterile surgery, and which had been obtained by "moonlight requisition" were easily concealed from the inspector who set about the camp with a firm intent to do his assigned duty to the letter, even if he disrupted a well-functioning unit in the process.

Other emotions were no doubt stirred by the orders for movement, and many of the personnel who had enjoyed their first seaside vacation during the stay at Morris were heard voicing nostalgic remarks about having to give up the easy life of a beachcomber and go back to work. The 77th had spent more time at this station than at any other since its inception, including Fort Leonard Wood, and in many respects had enjoyed more of the comforts of life here than at any other station overseas. On the other hand, the gradual loss of initiative and interest which came about as a result of the long period of inactivity was becoming

obvious, and the only remedy for this mental "dry rot" was also obvious—productive activity.

By the evening of September 1, nearly all the equipment including the living quarters had been packed and the night was spent with mosquito nets for cover. On the morning of September 2, the personnel traveled by truck to the harbor at Bone, and with their personal baggage boarded the British hospital ship, *Amarapoora*. This vessel was a converted passenger craft of the Burma Line, and like its sister ships was named for a city of Burma.

The quarters designed for ambulatory patients were assigned to the enlisted personnel. The quarters for litter patients were divided between the officers and nurses. These accommodations were much nicer than those on the two previous voyages of the 77th, and since no other passengers were aboard, there was none of the crowding of the other trips. The white ship, with its horizontal green stripe and large red crosses was a far cry from the camouflage painting of the ordinary troop transports, and the blaze of lights at night, seemed almost criminal after the



HOSPITAL SHIP "AMARAPOORA"

long period of blackout. Shortly after the ship had been boarded, an order went out that all guns, knives, or other weapons carried in personal baggage as souvenirs must be surrendered immediately before the ship could sail. This was in keeping with the Geneva Convention prohibiting weapons of war in any ship or installation claiming protection under the Geneva Cross. There was an immediate scramble to unpack bed-rolls and barracks bags in order to retrieve the objectional *armes d'Guerre* which were carefully tagged with the owner's name and set ashore for shipment with the unit equipment. There was a universal dim view taken of the prospect of ever recovering these souvenirs.

The British custom of distinction between the enlisted and commissioned grades became evident at meal time, and although the fare in the officers' and nurses' sections was rather good, the enlisted men complained bitterly about their mess, and many stated that they subsisted mainly on bread and butter during the voyage. Since there were no mess halls or tables in the sections for litter patients, it was necessary for the officers and nurses to eat in bed. The word of the day among the officers became, "Let's go get in bed, it's time for tea."

An overnight cruise brought the *Amarapoor* to Bizerte and into the inner harbor where it remained at anchor the remainder of the day. Toward evening it pulled out into the outer harbor for the night so that its lights would not betray the location of the other ships in the inner harbor to hostile aircraft. Early the evening of the next day, September 4, the ships pulled away from Bizerte, and shortly after noon on the 5th, arrived at the harbor of Palermo, Sicily. Due to bomb damage to the docks and sunken ships in the harbor, it was impossible to get the ship to a pier and an LCT was pulled alongside the hospital ship. A long ladder was put up from the deck of the LCT to the rail of the *Amarapoor*, twenty feet above. Bed rolls were allowed to slide down the ladder which was nearly vertical and many of them broke open, scattering their contents widely over the deck of the LCT. The display of feminine articles of clothing which took place when several of the nurses' bed rolls exploded as they hit the deck was responsible for considerable hilarity on the part of the audience at the rail of the ship. Much embarrassment was written on the faces of the hapless men who reluctantly retrieved the scattered underwear, curling irons, and knitting needles and put them back in the bed rolls with the galoshes and boxes of kleenex. After the officers had clambered shakily down the ladder, the nurses were let down in a bosun's chair. A short run brought the LCT to a paved runway where the ramp was dropped and the passengers walked ashore. Ambulances and trucks transported the personnel and baggage through the city to the courtyard of the University of Palermo Hospital and Medical School where the American 59th Evacuation Hospital was stationed. All personnel were quartered in the hospital buildings and furnished with cots or steel hospital beds.



59TH EVACUATION HOSPITAL, PALERMO

Many of the buildings of the hospital and medical school had been built during the Fascist regime and were well constructed of stone and marble. The grounds were nicely landscaped and orange, banana and palm trees lined the walks and drives. Several of the buildings had suffered considerable damage from bombing, and the glass had been blown from nearly all the windows. The men were quartered in the obstetrical building and slept among the museum specimens of embryos in glass jars and anatomical charts. The medical museum was damaged but little and the skeleton of an acromegalic giant in the foyer occasioned much comment about how a man's skull could be so thick.

The 59th Evacuation Hospital personnel proved to be very gracious hosts and extended their generosity in every manner to their guests. The food was much better than the 77th had experienced at any time in Africa, and it was here that the 77th cooks learned a few tricks in the preparation of powdered eggs so that they were more palatable.

Two civilian barbers had been granted a franchise and were operating on the hospital grounds. Fruit, grapes, and nuts were sold at a supervised stand on the grounds and the prices were controlled. The grounds were surrounded by a wall, and a constant guard was maintained at all the gates to keep out the hordes of children who thronged about the gates begging for cigarettes, candy, and chewing gum. Many of the children were selling roasted almonds which they dispensed in small cones of newspaper for five or ten *lira*.

After a day or two of becoming settled in quarters, all personnel were assigned duties. Ward duty by the enlisted men was assigned by roster regardless of the sort of work the man had previously done, and many of the men from the supply, maintenance, and sanitation sections had their first experience in ward work. Casualties began arriving from the Italian campaign in rather large numbers, and ward tents were erected in the courtyards to take care of the influx.

Duties were still light enough, however, to allow sufficient off-duty hours to visit the city of Palermo and its environs. The general headquarters of the Seventh Army, under command of Gen. Patton was located at Palermo and regulations regarding conduct of all military personnel were strictly enforced by the military police who were in evidence in large numbers all over the city. Bomb damage to the business and residential sections of the city was comparatively slight and many of the shops and stores were well stocked with merchandise. A concerted effort was made to prevent inflation and protect the American soldiers as well as the civilians from exorbitant prices. For many units, including the 77th, this was the first opportunity to buy articles of real value, and a sellers' market prevailed. Merchants who were asking more than an appraised fair price for their wares soon found their shops decorated with large placards reading, "Off Limits to American Military Personnel," and an MP was in front of the shop to enforce the regulation. Articles of silk, including stockings, women's and children's dresses and underwear; leather goods, especially gloves; lace and embroidery, were selling at reasonable prices. Several shoe shops made shoes to order on short notice, and a popular item was ladies' shoes with wedge heels of cork. Several marble workers made small ash trays with personalized engravings for souvenirs. Chief among bargains in the jewelry shops were cameos, and many exquisitely carved cameos, both mounted and unmounted were being sold at prices which seemed very reasonable. One fact which made many such articles actually cheap in purchase price was the lack of any import duty on gifts sent by an American soldier to the United States.

The American Military Police in their white helmets and leggings and well pressed uniforms were in sharp contrast with the local constabulary of native *Carabinieri*, resplendent in red-trimmed blue uniforms, hats of Napoleonic design, gold braid and swords.

On the evening of September 8, 1943, the formal announcement of Italy's surrender by Badoglio's government

was made, and the entire city of Palermo was turned into a huge carnival of celebration and revelry. There was singing and dancing in the streets, shouts of *Comarade* to the Americans, and fireworks, the latter furnished by lighting strips of TNT which were then thrown into puddles of water where they crackled and sputtered like an entire package of firecrackers. Wine flowed freely, and many houses were thrown open to the American soldiers passing by. Despite the difficulties of language differences, many Americans were wined and dined in the home of the jubilant Sicilians, genuinely happy to be rid of the yoke of Fascism.

The actual surrender had taken place on September 3, but announcement was withheld in order to prevent the



CARABINIERI, PALERMO

Nazis from taking over Italian defenses before Allied troops could enter through the Gulf of Salerno.

Points of interest in and about the city of Palermo include the *Quattro Canti* at the intersection of the two main streets, the *Via Vittorio Emmanuele*, and *Via Macqueda*. The *Quattro* is an octagonal space lined with elegant buildings in different styles of Grecian architecture and adorned with numerous statues. The two principal streets are opened into by a great number of others, mostly narrower and of inferior description, but all well paved with blocks of lava. Places of resort are provided by the *Marina* and the *Flora*—the former a superb terrace about eighty yards wide, stretching about a mile along the bay; the latter commencing in the east where the terrace terminates in a magnificent public garden regularly laid out, and adorned with statues, fountains, and rustic temples. Here also is a botanical garden of some extent, and there are several other public gardens. The Royal Palace, finely situated and surrounded by beautiful gardens, is a large and irregular pile of buildings representing the architectural contributions of the various rulers of the province. The foundation of Palermo is attributed to the Phoenicians, from them it passed to the Carthaginians who made it the capital of their Sicilian possessions. The Romans obtained possession of it in 254 B.C., and made it a free town and conferred on it many important privileges. After the fall of the Roman Empire it remained, except for a brief vandal rule, a port of the Eastern empire, until in 835 the Saracens became its masters and kept possession of it until 1071 when it was taken by Roger the Norman who founded the kingdom

of Sicily. The chapel of King Roger (or Palatine Chapel) in the Royal Palace is perhaps the greatest attraction in the palace. Rich in mosaics, it has been termed, "probably the most beautiful palace-chapel in the world."



ROYAL PALACE, PALERMO

Five miles to the southwest of Palermo, and connected with it by surface car tracks is the city of Monreale, the seat of an archbishopric. It has a well-preserved cathedral, built in 1174-1189, with old bronze doors and beautiful mosaics. Also there is a Benedictine abbey dating from the 12th century with a magnificent cloister of 216 mosaic pillars, and several monumental graves of Norman kings. One of the monks pointed out several of the mosaics where the gold inlay had been picked out by the invading hordes in the early history of the cathedral and remarked about the lack of wanton looting and plunder by the Americans.

Nearer Palermo are the "catacombs," a maze of irregular, interconnecting subterranean passageways lined with



BODIES LYING IN STATE IN THE CATACOMBS

the coffins of bodies probably interred in the 16th and 17th centuries. The majority of the coffins were open, so that the mummified bodies could be plainly seen, lying in state or in a standing position, many clothed in magnificent robes and headdress. All ages and sexes are represented,

and many appear from their attire to have been state and church dignitaries.

The buildings of the city itself are quite varied in age and architectural style, new apartment dwellings of modernistic design mingled with 18th century structures.

The American Red Cross operated a club for enlisted men in a large building in the heart of the business district,



BODIES IN STANDING POSITION IN THE CATACOMBS

and a well rounded program of entertainment was maintained. The lounge, with its comfortable, overstuffed furniture was by no means a minor attraction, and the faces of the men reflected the pleasure of so simple a luxury as a comfortable chair. Fresh lemonade was always on hand at the club in unlimited quantities, lemons being easily available from the groves of the surrounding country. Several daily tours from the Red Cross club provided transportation to the various points of interest in and about the city together with information regarding them.

During the sojourn of the 77th in Palermo, occurred the annual Feast of Santa Rosalia. During a devastating epidemic of plague in the 14th century, a woman had appeared from some place in the surrounding mountains, and is accredited with having brought the epidemic to an abrupt halt by her prayers and supplications. For many decades the burial place of this saint was unknown but it was finally discovered in a grotto on the side of a mountain near the city. A chapel has been built there, and each year her remains are brought forth and carried about the city in a colorful ceremony of ecclesiastic pageantry and it is said that no plague has infested Palermo since the first annual procession of Santa Rosalia.

Capt. Milnor and his detachment of six men, (Sgt. Ryan, S/Sgt. Dry, Sgt. Kenneth Smith, Cpl. Pilch, Pfc. Barnhardt, and Pfc. Jenks) arrived in Palermo harbor with the equipment, aboard the *S. S. Proceeda*, an antiquated small freighter of French registry, on about Sept. 20. Accompanying them was Lt. Smith, A.N.C., who had been attached to the party shortly before they sailed from Bone. Their tales of the difficulties encountered in packing and loading the equipment were sprinkled with humor and profanity. The shooting of a cow by a near-sighted (?) guard, who mistook the animal for a native, highlighted all the stories of their frenzied attempts to keep the Arab horde from walking off with the equipment before it could be transported to the docks. The manner in which the Arab stevedores dropped crates on the docks in order

to pilfer the contents was a matter of considerable concern to the men who saw scarce articles of equipment smashed or stolen. Lt. Smith's comments regarding life aboard the dirty vessel consisted chiefly of "Ugh!"

Within a few days, most of the equipment had been unloaded and transported to a site five miles west of Licata on the southern shore of Sicily. An ironic scene developed when the enlisted men, engaged in the heavy labor of unloading the equipment from the ship and loading it on freight cars, were obliged to work sixteen hours without food while the Italian prisoners in a prisoner-of-war labor battalion on the same job were fed hot food from a mess truck.

On Sept. 22, 1943, Col. Samuel B. Cooke, M.C., arrived and assumed command of the unit.

By Sept. 25, the advance detail to Licata, under command of Major Dillon, had erected living quarters at the new site and the bulk of the command entrained for the new location. The officers and nurses boarded a two-car motor driven train whose external appearance overrated its mechanical ability to cope with the steep grades encountered in the mountains of central Sicily. As the motorman entered, he solemnly crossed himself twice and assumed a very concerned look. He was followed closely by an armed guard of the U. S. Army Transportation Corps who stationed himself in a "ready" position behind the motorman. All this served temporarily to dampen the holiday spirit of the passengers already intent at the prospect of what promised to be a comparatively clean and comfortable journey. When the train began to battle its way up the first steep grade in the mountains, it became obvious that this was no "Super Chief" type of streamliner. The frantic gear shifting of the motorman failed to prevent the inevitable stall half way up the grade, and when the train, motors dead, began to roll backwards, doubt gave way to apprehension. After numerous attempts, the motors were finally coaxed into pulling the cars up the grade and the remainder of the trip was made without significant mechanical incident.

After passing through a narrow coastal strip of fertile garden plots and citrus groves, the country became quite mountainous with jagged rocks and sparse vegetation. Sheep and goats clambered about the rocky slopes in search of any edible vegetation, and the appearance of the people reflected the poverty of the soil. Groves of nut trees, especially almonds, were occasionally seen and the train passed through several small cork forests. Where irrigation was possible in the valleys, vineyards and garden plots dotted the landscape.

About mid-way across Sicily, the train carrying the officers and nurses passed the enlisted men's train as it sat on a siding. Consisting of eight coaches and four box cars for baggage, this train had departed from Palermo several hours before the officers' and nurses' train, but despite its four steam engines, had had difficulty with almost every grade. The engines were in a poor state of repair so that it appeared that more steam escaped through loose fittings than was used in the cylinders and on several occasions it was necessary to back down a grade, build up steam, and then take a second run at it in order to reach the summit.

The officers' and nurses' train arrived at Licata about sundown, but the enlisted men's train did not arrive until four-thirty, the morning of Sept. 26.

The hospital site lay about five miles west of Licata in a low place some one thousand yards from the beach. The 175th Engineers had graded roadways and cleaned the immediate area of mines. The equipment was trucked in from the train in Licata and the hospital went up rapidly. In spite of the more cumbersome and difficult methods of packing the equipment for shipment by boat, the standardized procedure of erection was so efficient that there was little wasted effort, and on Sept. 27, the day after arrival, the unit was functioning and 211 patients were admitted.

The chief source of admission was the 1st Division and attached troops bivouacked in the vicinity. The majority of the cases were medical in nature, and the bulk of these were cases of malaria and acute infectious hepatitis with jaundice. Many of the patients had both malaria and hepatitis. Amoebic and bacillary dysentery were not uncommon and the usual respiratory infections were always present. Infections of the skin were quite prevalent and although some of them appeared to be cases of cutaneous leishmaniasis, the majority of them were apparently staphylococcus and streptococcus infections. The surgical cases were chiefly injuries from traffic accidents and injuries sustained by handling explosives left lying about by the retreating enemy. Most of the latter type were in native children who innocently picked up live grenades and stepped on mines.

Fresh water was scarce and facilities for bathing were meager. The fresh water which was available was very poor and hardly potable. All soaps refused to lather in the water and shaving cream curdled on the men's faces when they attempted to shave. No doubt this contributed largely to the skin infections. A shampoo was never attempted a second time in this water and it was entirely unfit for sterilization of instruments. A five thousand gallon collapsible tank was set up on a scaffold of heavy timbers so that a supply of water could be maintained at all times. The water truck and trailer were busy supplying the current needs of the hospital by day, and by night they hauled water to fill the tank.

A mobile sterilizing unit was obtained, and this was used to heat water for showers in an improvised shower chamber consisting of a wooden floor surrounded by canvas. Twelve shower heads could be supplied with warm water, flowing by gravity from the large storage tank through the sterilizer. Sgt. Elmer Rue of the utilities section was in charge of the shower unit as well as a still which he had set up on the beach to supply distilled water for use in surgery and in the sterilization of instruments.

After the engineers had cleared mines from a path to the beach, bathing in the Mediterranean became popular as it had been in Africa; and although the beach was quite narrow, the sand was fairly clean and the water was warm enough to make it attractive to everyone. Two of the men, straying from the cleared path, tripped over mines and suffered minor injuries.

The weather continued mild until about the middle of October when high winds, blowing in from the Mediterranean, began to take a heavy toll of canvas. Tent stakes were torn loose from the hard, dry soil and were difficult to replace. Many of the tents were badly torn. After a few preliminary showers, the rains began to come in torrents and within a few hours, the entire hospital area was a quagmire. Several of the natives in the vicinity remarked that they had been surprised to see the area selected for a

hospital site since it was a lake during the winter and spring months and only dried up during the late summer and fall. In spite of extensive drainage ditches, it was impossible to keep some of the areas above water. The nurses' living quarters were in the lowest area of the site, and one morning about five o'clock, the OD answered a call for aid in one of the nurses' tents and found the four occupants with legs drawn up sitting amidst their luggage on their cots. The tent floor was covered by about six inches of water, and floating on a board in the center of the tent, a small green frog chirped contentedly.

Scorpions, centipedes, and lizards, so common in the area in dry weather, now seemed to seek the relative dryness of the tents. A careful search of blankets and sleeping bags for the unwelcome guests became as routine as fastening the mosquito nets before retiring for the night. Shoes were a favorite abode for the pests at night, and unhappy was he who neglected to shake out his shoes before dressing in the morning. Kangaroo rats were frequently seen hopping about in the mud, their long tufted tails dragging through the puddles.

After the rains had continued for several days, the camp roadways and walks were so completely soaked that all attempts to maintain passable ways were fruitless and the truckloads of crushed rock and gravel which were dumped on the roads quickly disappeared into the deepening mud. Fortunately, admissions had begun to decrease materially, and the work of the hospital was not so heavy. Some of the roads were practically impassable to ambulances, which made it necessary to carry litter cases from the ambulances which had to stop at the front drive. Since no battle casualties were being received, the new cases were almost always admitted in daylight hours and there was a minimum of night work for everyone.

Rumors of a movement of the 1st Division caused a sharp decline in the admissions since the unit morale among these seasoned troops was very high, and the men were reluctant to report at sick call for an ailment which might require hospitalization at the time of an expected move. When the rumors were confirmed and the move was officially announced, only the seriously ill would take the chance of separation from their unit by being sent to a hospital. Consternation reigned among the 1st Division patients still in the hospital and all sorts of subterfuge was used in an attempt to be dismissed. Some of these men had actually experienced the anguish of trying to get back to their units through the channels of replacement depots. Their stories of the confusion and red tape encountered in the procedure of getting back to their unit, were embellished with profanity and words of contempt. The "gold bricks," of which there were few, became well overnight, and the patients who were ill, tried in every way possible to conceal their illness. Temperature charts were unreliable unless a nurse or corpsman stood by the patient and made certain that the thermometer was actually kept in the mouth. When the news was circulated that the division was to move by sea and that the probable destination was England, it became next to impossible to hold a man in the hospital who could eat and walk. Pressure was brought to bear on the ward surgeons by line officers from the 1st Division who came in droves to make promises of an easy trip and continued tender loving care for these patients if only they could be dismissed. Many of the patients threatened to leave the hospital, AWOL, unless they were dis-

charged to duty. By evening of the day before the 1st Division was to move, only a handful of the very ill remained in the hospital.

Evacuation of patients from the Licata stand was never large scale, since the majority of cases were acute illnesses and were well and ready to return to duty in a relatively short time. The bulk of the patients needing further care in a general hospital were evacuated by air to the hospitals in the Bizerte area. The planes used a landing strip a few miles from the hospital until the heavy rains made the strip unsafe, after which evacuation was done by ambulance to a more permanent air field or they were evacuated to Palermo by train.

Recreation at the Licata site was chiefly composed of the "unorganized" variety since competitive sports were out of the question due to the mud. The enlisted men erected a double ward tent for a recreation room and organized the "Smokum Club," with duly elected officers, dues, and a bar. The officers' and nurses' recreation tent was commonly frequented by about three times as many visiting officers as by members of the unit. Many old acquaintances with 1st Division officers were renewed. The historic battles of the African landings, the Kasserine breakthrough, the battles of El Guettar and Maknassy, and the Sicilian landings were refought many times over a glass of wine or cognac. The torrents of rain, the flapping tent walls, the bare, swinging light bulbs and the muddy floor failed to detract from the warmth of fellowship as old friends and former patients came to pay their respects and exchange the latest rumors.

A very picturesque chateau on top of a hill, some three

miles from camp, was rented by the officers' and nurses' club and a well attended party was held there one evening. In comparison with living quarters and conditions at camp, the party was an elaborate affair with punch, canapes, and decorations. Many of the uniforms bore the marks of their long period of storage in bed rolls and barracks bags and much of the brass was not very well polished.

An ammunition dump a few miles from camp caught fire and burned for nearly twenty-four hours. The display of fireworks from this holocaust was quite a spectacular sight at night and since no danger to the spectators was involved, it furnished the first opportunity to see such activity without running for the nearest hole in the ground.

During off duty hours, several trips were made by small groups to visit the Roman ruins at Agrigento and a few other spots in the vicinity. Several fishing trips were made with native fishermen in their sailboats, but very few fish were caught.

On about October 14, 1943, it was learned that the unit was to be returned to England, and Lt. Col. Hashinger left immediately to serve as advance agent in England. The hospital was evacuated and some of the equipment was turned in to the quartermaster at Licata. The bulk of the equipment was torn down, packed and loaded on a train at Licata in readiness for shipment to the quartermaster at Palermo. Packing was difficult in the mud, and at the height of this procedure, orders were issued to turn in all galoshes since they would not be needed in England. Near insurrection resulted, but orders are orders and the men waded about with wet feet in ankle deep mud and water



MONDELLO BEACH

while their four-buckles were sent to be counted and re-counted in some quartermaster warehouse in Palermo.

By October 28, the packing was completed and all personnel boarded the same trains which had brought them to Licata. The enlisted men's return trip was somewhat less tiresome than the trip from Palermo had been, since less time was consumed, and the thought of getting out of the malaria infested swamp was a great help to morale. Destination proved to be a large staging area near Mondello Beach, made up of a concentrated city of pyramidal tents where troops were processed and held in readiness for shipment out of Sicily. Aside from personal baggage, only such housekeeping articles as kitchen equipment, office records, and a few odds and ends of professional gear had been retained from the entire stock of unit baggage. Everything had been remarked with the code "62010-E," the old familiar "9190-0" which had originally been put on at Fort Leonard Wood was gone and the new number looked quite strange.

The staging area lay in a valley separated from the sea by a long mountainous ridge, and backed by low, rolling hills. A wide boulevard ran past the camp leading from Palermo to the resort and beach area of Mondello. The nurses were quartered in tents across the boulevard from the main tent city. Temporary wooden structures with roofs but without side walls were provided for kitchens and mess halls. A shower unit was also available. Board walks running along the rows of tents helped to keep down the mud problem; but within a few days the grayish brown mud of Licata was being replaced on shoes and uniforms by the yellowish red mud of Mondello. The rain continued intermittently, but at times between showers, the warm sun came out and lighted up the landscape and the faces of the thousands of troops in the area.

When the weather permitted, many of the men walked up the rock mountain near the camp. From the top of the mountain, one could see the city of Palermo, the staging area, and Mondello on one side and the sea and harbor



CONCRETE BLOCK HOUSE

on the other side. On one of these trips, T/4 James C. Howard, T/Sgt. Chauncey Felt, Sgt. William Hagan, T/4 Richard Logan, and T/4 James Cover encountered the trip wire of a booby trap barely in time to avert tragedy. The base of the mountain was studded with strong points and concrete block houses and pillboxes built by the enemy to command the roads in the area.

After a few days of relative freedom, during which passes were given leniently, the entire camp was placed under strict security and no one was allowed to enter or leave except on official business.

The 59th Evacuation Hospital sent out a call for help since they were receiving large numbers of casualties from the fighting in Italy. Several of the 77th nurses were sent on detached service with that hospital.

A mild epidemic of diphtheria broke out among troops in the staging area, chiefly in the 20th Engineer Battalion which was quartered in the section next to the 77th. Throat inspection was held in all units each morning, and within



RESORT AREA, MONDELLO BEACH

a relatively short time, the situation was under control although for a few days it appeared that the entire troop movement might be delayed.

The unit was on a six hour alert basis for the last five days in the staging area, and during this period, the movement schedule was changed several times. Actual loading of baggage on trucks had begun on one occasion when a delay order came from the liaison officer at the port of embarkation office in Palermo. The convoy of ships which was to carry the entire movement had been attacked by enemy torpedo planes off Bizerte with the loss of at least one troop transport, and the entire loading plan had to be revamped. During these last few days in the staging area, rain came down almost continuously, and since there was no duty, everyone stayed in his bed much of the time where he at least could be warm and dry.

After several delays and changes in the schedule of movement, the time of loading was finally set for November 10. An hour before dawn, the men were up and started on the task of policing the entire area. Cots and other housing equipment used by the nurses had been packed and turned in the evening before, and the nurses had spent the night in the mess hall. The usual scene of confusion attendant upon the final packing of barracks bags and field packs developed and faded into an orderly array of baggage within a space of a little more than an hour. Then came the inevitable final period of waiting for the transportation to arrive. Such periods usually found the men sitting or standing about in small groups, smoking and talking, and furnished an opportunity for reflection and meditation on another completed chapter of war experience and speculation as to the future. In general, the

MEDICINE UNDER CANVAS

theme of such conversations was one of anticipation of better things to come and only rarely was there reluctance to exchange the old for the new.



STAGING AREA, PALERMO

PALERMO I PROMOTIONS AND COMMISSIONS

SEPTEMBER, 1943:

TO TECHNICIAN 3RD GRADE—Herbert M. Chadwick, Charles J. Dry, Kenneth F. McConnell, Donald J. McKenny, Donald E. Nicksch, and Rudolph G. Wolff.

JOINED THE UNIT

SEPTEMBER, 1943:

Col. S. L. Cooke, M.C., Capt. Homer Head, M.C., 2nd Lt. Helen M. Smith, A.N.C., and Pvt. Leo E. Schmelz.

LEFT THE UNIT

SEPTEMBER, 1943:

Capt. Albert C. Steffens to the States; 2nd Lt. Benjamin D. Ramaley and 2nd Lt. William L. Davis to the 11th Field Hosp.; 1st Lt. Leonard J. Haas, 1st Lt. Carl E. Porter, Pvt. Tilden C. Abrigo, Pvt. Robert H. Carey, T/5 Howard Clute, Pfc. Doyle B. Crosten, T/5 Wilbur H. Gum, Pvt. Leslie T. Harris, Pvt. Ralph C. James, Pvt. Henry H. Kent, Pvt. Roy M. McClamrock, Pvt. Lannie Kirk, Pvt. Verner O. Lathrop, Pvt. Davis W. McKenzie, Pvt. Roy L. Parker, Pvt. Roy T. Wright, Pvt. Thomas H. Rhyne, Pvt. Willis B. Roberson, T/5 Walter J. Thom to the 261st Medical Battalion; Pvt. Lacey Lowery, Pvt. Leo A. Morin, Pvt. Joseph B. Newman and Pvt. Ivy J. Turner to the 93rd Evacuation Hospital; Pvt. Marcel Miguez, Pvt. Alvin B. Thompson, T/5 Stanford Van Baalen, and Pvt. Marvin H. Wunderlich to the 10th Field Hospital.

LICATA PROMOTIONS AND COMMISSIONS

OCTOBER, 1943:

TO MAJOR—Thomas G. Duckett, Morris S. Harless, William F. Kuhn and Wendell A. Grosjean.

TO 2ND LT. M.A.C.—Marvin L. Bowers, Donald W. Nicksch and Earl L. Hoard.

TO TECHNICIAN 3RD GRADE—James L. Partin and Gordon G. Weber.

TO CORPORAL—James H. Fox, Ashpy Hedger, Martin A. Huff, and Clarence O. Sindt.

TO TECHNICIAN 5TH GRADE—William S. Rountree.

JOINED THE UNIT

OCTOBER, 1943:

Capt. James E. McEvoy, Chaplain, Catholic; 2nd Lt. Virginia L. Thuss, A.N.C., and T/5 Robert W. Kolb.

LEFT THE UNIT

OCTOBER, 1943:

Capt. Joseph J. Lalich to the 2nd Auxiliary Team; 2nd Lt. Donald W. Nicksch to the 2nd Medical Battalion; T/4 James K. Meadows and Pvt. Ernest Priest to the hospital.

PALERMO II PROMOTIONS AND COMMISSIONS

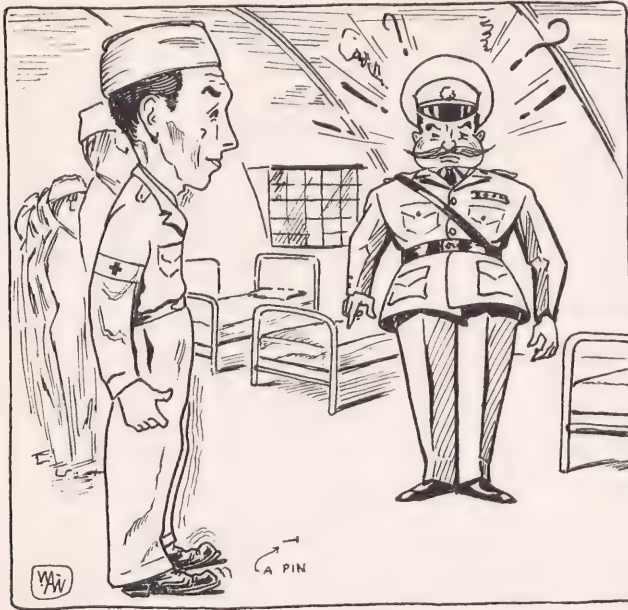
TO CAPTAIN—Paul E. Bennett, Nihil K. Venis and Leslie B. Williams.

TO 1ST LT.—Florence V. Hanson, Hermina M. Nahrendorf, and Enid M. Wherley.

LEFT THE UNIT

NOVEMBER, 1943:

Capt. Nathaniel B. Soderberg to the States.



Chapter VI

ABOUT eight o'clock on the morning of November 10, the trucks arrived and were immediately loaded with baggage for the ship's hold. More trucks appeared and all personnel were loaded and taken to the dock area of Palermo. Here long lines were forming to board ship by a previously arranged roster, so that each man appeared at the gangplank in his expected order of loading, and there was no delay in identifying each man by name as he walked up the gangplank to board the *U.S.A.T.S. John Ericsson*, a twenty thousand ton motor ship, German-built and previously of Swedish registry. In general, quarters aboard ship were good; certainly they were far superior to those aboard the *Orcades* and perhaps as good as the *Brazil* and *Uruguay*. There was considerably more room in the sleeping compartments, the hanging steel cots being so arranged that they could be folded up against the wall when not in use. As on all troop ships, latrine facilities were horribly inadequate.

Meals were served twice daily in a large mess hall not far from the sleeping compartments. Meal tickets were used for each meal in order to prevent a man going through the line twice at one meal. The rations were American, and the food was above average for troop ships. Water was especially scarce due to the overloading of the ship and it had to be conserved at all times. In an effort to give all troops an equal opportunity on the overcrowded decks, a schedule was worked out for each unit with specified times to vacate their quarters and go to a certain area on a certain deck. There was apparently some confusion in the schedule, however, and the men complained of being ordered out to the deck so that a cleaning detail could police the quarters only to be ordered back down again by some officer on deck whose schedule was entirely different, and the resulting confusion kept the men going up and down the stairways much of the time.

The nurses were in fairly comfortable quarters above deck, but the officers were crowded together considerably. Canvas cots had been placed in every possible space, and in most of the staterooms there was no empty floor space

upon which to stand or walk between the three-tiered bunks on either side of the room. Several near casualties resulted when one officer leaped from his top bunk onto the form of a cot-sleeper in the center of the room.

The convoy, consisting of several crowded troop ships with adequate escort vessels, sailed from Palermo Harbor shortly after midnight the morning of November 11, 1943. This date marked exactly one year for the 77th in the Mediterranean Theatre of Operations. As the convoy passed along the North African shore headed west, a few familiar landmarks could be made out and Oran was seen clearly enough to identify some of the buildings.

Since hostile aircraft, particularly torpedo bombers, was a constant threat to all Allied shipping in the Mediterranean at that time, special precautions were taken against this menace as well as the usual ones against enemy submarines. Near Gibraltar, enemy planes were sighted, and the anti-aircraft weapons of a part of the convoy opened fire. The marauders were driven off without damage to the convoy. Early on the morning of November 15, the convoy passed through the Straits of Gibraltar, and three days later the Azores were sighted. As the convoy seemed to be pursuing a northwesterly course from the Azores, all sorts of rumors began to float about the ship as to the destination of the convoy. Many of the wishful thinkers began to offer varied bits of evidence to the theory that the convoy was bound for the United States. Apparently one of the ship's crew did let fall the remark that Portland, Maine was the nearest port of call.

Shortly after boarding the ship, the professional personnel and some of the enlisted personnel of the 77th, together with several assigned medical corpsmen from the 9th Medical Battalion were given primary duty in the ship's hospital. Within 24 hours the hospital was nearly filled to capacity. The majority of cases, as had been anticipated, were malaria or hepatitis or both; although respiratory infections and intestinal infections were common. As many as six of the 77th nurses were patients in the hospital at one time, and one nurse underwent an appendectomy in the ship's hospital operating room somewhere in the Atlantic.

Although specific orders had been issued that all personnel was to continue taking atabrine as a malaria suppressive during the voyage, many of the troops were not receiving the drug and consequently a large number of cases of malaria developed which could at least have been delayed until the destination of the convoy was reached and more adequate hospital facilities were available. It became evident quite early in the voyage that hospital care could be furnished only for the more seriously ill patients, and that even some cases of malaria must be treated in their quarters.

Due to some misunderstanding, a great deal of difficulty was experienced in getting adequate rations and medication for the hospital patients although there was admittedly no actual shortage of the items in the ship's stores. After pressure had been brought to bear by some of the higher ranking officers of the troops aboard ship, the situation eased considerably.

As the convoy moved into the North Atlantic, the weather became colder and the sea less docile. The water and fuel oil supplies of the *John Ericsson* were running quite low. There was little or no cargo or ballast in the ship's holds, and these facts coupled with the overloading of human

cargo and baggage above decks, resulted in a gradually increasing list which must have reached fifteen degrees or more near the end of the voyage. Due to the constant zig-zag procedure of the convoy, the list shifted from port to starboard with each zig and back again with each zag. This constant teeter-totter activity combined with the heavy seas which were running in the North Atlantic, made for very unsteady footing, especially below decks, where no horizon was visible and only a confused equilibratory sense seemed to prevent bruised limbs and cracked skulls in the passageways and compartments. An increasing number of empty chairs appeared in the officers' and nurses' mess and shorter lines in the enlisted men's mess halls gave mute evidence to the increase in seasickness. There is probably no other color of the human skin which can compare to the hue which develops in a seasick soldier whose skin is already stained a mustard yellow from months of daily doses of atabrine.

For those who had no duties in the mess or hospital sections, life aboard the troop ship became a dull routine after a few days. Reading material was limited in scope and quantity, and detective story fiction in paper bound editions was passed from hand to hand until the pages became lost or illegible. Card games and dice-throwing were always popular pastimes, and some poker games ran continuously from morning until late at night, the individual players changing one by one as ill fortune precluded further playing or when two or three players temporarily left the game to eat; the empty places were usually

immediately taken by others who were waiting for an opening.

Shortly before sundown each evening a "standing" alert was sounded over the ship's loud-speaker system. Those who had duties in the hospital section or as members of a life-boat crew, reported to their respective stations and remained there for an hour or so until the twilight period had passed. All other troops were expected to be in their quarters, fully dressed with life belts fastened in position. This measure was taken because of the increased danger from submarine attack at this particular time of day. Other practice alerts and boat drills were called at irregular and unannounced periods. It was obvious to everyone aboard that the extra troops on the ship had made the lifeboat and life raft situation even worse than usual. In case the ship went down, the actual number of people who could find available space in a boat or raft would be comparatively small. This fact served to increase the importance of keeping a kapok life preserver at hand at all times. In fact, to be found at any place on the ship without this constant companion was a misdemeanor punishable by disciplinary action. One of the men lit a cigarette on an open deck after dark one night and spent the remainder of the voyage in the ship's brig. His account of this punishment later, however, caused his buddies to wonder if he had actually been punished, since he had more spacious quarters, better food, and much better latrine facilities than the majority of the enlisted men on board ship.

As the convoy sailed down the Irish Sea from north to



THE "JOHN ERICSSON"

south, a storm developed which prevented the ships from entering the narrow lane between the mine fields in the Mersey River estuary, and the *John Ericsson* was anchored in a cove down the coast until the gale had blown itself out the next day. Barrage balloons and British Spitfires dotted the air as the ship pulled alongside the Prince's Landing Stage in Liverpool Harbor. All troops on open decks immediately rushed to the port rail to exchange banter with the American and British soldiers on the landing. This only served to increase the dangerous list of the ship, whose captain was bellowing through a megaphone from the bridge for the men to move to the starboard side of the ship. After considerable difficulty, the ship was berthed and the plans for disembarking were put in operation. By five-thirty in the evening, the first units were lined up on deck. Hand luggage was carried down the gangplank and taken by truck to trains waiting nearby.

Having landed at this same place some fifteen months previously, the 77th had now served on three continents; had experienced four ocean voyages; a variety of climatic conditions from desert heat to snowfall; had been faced with hunger, pestilence, and danger; and as a result of these experiences had developed into a closely knit unit capable of the highest type of field medical service and displayed an "*esprit de corps*" as great as many of the regular army units with backgrounds of history and tradition of many years duration. With this attitude then, it is only natural that the individuals considered themselves seasoned veterans, and looked with mingled patronage and scorn at the sharply pressed uniforms and polished brass of the American troops whose war experience to date had been limited to the barracks life in England.

After leaving the ship, all personnel marched the short distance to the train through partially lighted passageways and were assigned compartments with little delay or waiting. Red Cross attendants came through the train with coffee and doughnuts, chewing gum, cigarettes and a copy of "*Stars and Stripes*." There were plenty of seats for everyone on the train and the cars were warm enough that overcoats could be doffed without being uncomfortable. In all, a marked contrast to the previous landing at Liver-



HOSPITAL AREA

pool was obvious to those who remembered the long march through the black city, the apparent lack of organization and the shortage of transportation of all types in November of 1942. At about nine o'clock in the morning the train pulled out of the station. The comparative comfort of

upholstered seats in a heated train was in such contrast to the several long trips by truck or train in Africa that there were practically no complaints and morale was high as the train arrived at Ludgershall Station in Southern England at nine o'clock the morning of November 12, to find Col. Hashinger waiting on the platform. Personnel and baggage were loaded on the waiting trucks and carried through the English countryside to Everleigh Manor where a semi-permanent hospital had been built by the British under lend-lease.

Nissen hut-type wards and living quarters were dispersed over the flat land of the large estate and were connected by cement walks or enclosed passageways. No hospital equipment had been installed as yet and only enough beds were set up in ward buildings to accommodate the officers and men. The nurses were assigned space in the smaller quarters buildings, four nurses to a building. An



NURSES' LIVING QUARTERS

ambulance company had been quartered in some of the buildings before the arrival of the 77th and their kitchen personnel had a hot breakfast of cereal, coffee, and scrambled (powdered) eggs ready for the newcomers.

As the baggage began to arrive by truck, there was a universal effort to scrape and brush the dried mud of Palermo off the baggage and clothing. Mummified lizards, dead centipedes and live mice were frequently found in bed rolls along with the mud and everyone welcomed the opportunity of a dry place to spread out their equipment and clean it. It was in this disheveled state the unit was found by the immaculate inspecting Col. M.C. from Southern Base Section Headquarters; and the entire unit began to know the meaning of the term, "European Theatre of Inspections." An officers' and nurses' assembly was immediately called and the inspecting officer was introduced. Instead of the expected warm words of greeting and welcome, he began by statements to the effect that this was undoubtedly the dirtiest and most slovenly outfit it had ever been his misfortune to inspect, and after these introductory statements, he began to be more specific regarding unpolished brass insignia, unshined shoes, muddy equipment and the like. Furthermore, the garbage cans had been carefully examined, and it was his estimate that the garbage rate per man in the 77th was at least twenty-two hundredths of an ounce more than the average for other units in his command area and with such wanton waste, the garbage record of the entire command would probably suffer and criticism would be heaped on his head by higher command. All this would be changed immediately, he

stated, and frequent unannounced inspections would be forthcoming until this renegade unit could be brought up to the standards set by other units in the area; several of which had not failed to pass an inspection in months.

After this speech had been delivered, officers and nurses stood at reluctant attention as the inspector strode out of the building. As the door closed behind him, some stood stunned in their places, others became loudly profane, and others thought the whole thing must have been a joke. Not a word had been said regarding what sort of work the unit would do, what facilities for patients should be ready, or what type of patients might be received.

The morale which had been so high began to plunge as each new day brought only further directives regarding uniform regulations, standards of personal appearance, and orientation data which had been prepared for green troops from the States but was routinely handed out to all units entering England. Blackout regulations were stressed, the British monetary system was explained and directives designed to acquaint Americans with the habits and customs of the British people were read and re-read. A training program was set forth including calisthenics, close order drill, road marches, gas mask drill, and instructions regarding air raid precautions and methods of dealing with incendiary bomb attacks. The stirrup-pump and sand bucket techniques were reviewed and demonstrations with burning incendiary bombs were held. A series of lectures by medical officers was delivered to the enlisted personnel on such subjects as personal hygiene and venereal disease information; and other lectures, designed chiefly for those men assigned to ward duty, covered the nursing and ward care important in various medical and surgical conditions. An "Army Talk" program was instituted and consisted of a weekly meeting at which two officers presented a formal discussion of the topic covered in that week's issue of the pamphlet, "Army Talks." General discussion was invited and encouraged but was always rather stunted and limited to the same few each week.

Each new day brought the fear of another inspection and further criticism. As time went on, however, new methods of avoiding criticism were devised. The mess personnel learned how to wring all the liquid content out of garbage waste and thereby cut down on the unit's garbage weight per man ratio. A better system of spreading the word about the area when a prospective inspector appeared at the front gate was devised; so that everyone could be better on his guard and smooth the wrinkles out of his bunk and be ready for inspection. One pair of well shined shoes was always kept ready to exhibit at inspection and any others were put out of sight. All sorts of ways and means were devised for presenting a regimented and smooth exterior to conceal the honest feeling beneath that all this was unnecessary show and "play-war" procedure. In spite of this undercurrent of feeling, there was a universal effort made to pass the inspection with as high marks as possible since it had been rumored that inferior units (rated entirely on grades attained in inspections) might be assigned permanent duty in some fixed place with only convalescent patients to care for or worse yet, that such units might be relegated solely to the care of venereal disease patients.

The suppressive doses of atabrine, which had been taken daily by all personnel in Africa and Sicily, had been continued through the voyage from Sicily to England in order to prevent overcrowding of the ship's hospital with cases

of malaria. This was stopped on arrival in England, however, and within the next few weeks, more and more cases of clinical malaria began to appear in the 77th. At one time, nearly one-third of the nurses were ill with malaria or hepatitis or both, and although the rate was considerably lower among officers and men, several cases did occur in each group. During the year spent in tents in Africa and Sicily, the unit had been singularly free from large scale epidemics of respiratory infections in spite of the adverse conditions frequently existing. Here in buildings, however, with closer crowding of men in quarters, such diseases as the common cold, tonsillitis, bronchitis and pneumonia began to run through the unit and very few escaped some such illness.

Mail had been very scarce during the latter weeks in Sicily, but now it began to appear in great quantities. The first trip to the APO resulted in a windfall of 150 bags of mail which required two large trucks for transportation to the unit. This probably furnished more support to the sagging morale than any other single factor, and the arrival of Christmas packages added a needed boost.

About the middle of December, orders were received to make the hospital ready for operation. Hospital equipment, chiefly of British type, was stored in some of the ward buildings and the task of cleaning the buildings and setting up the equipment was begun. The new ward buildings had never been cleaned and there was still a great deal of dust and dirt from the construction in and about the buildings. Much of the window and floor cleaning was done by the nurses who worked long hours in the capacity of janitors and charwomen. The equipment had to be carried across the area by hand, and this produced a great deal of back-breaking labor for the men; the heavy iron beds contributed largely to the blistered hands and tired backs. The floors of the buildings were of black pitch-mastic and required an enormous amount of scrubbing and polishing before they met with inspection requirements. The nearly continuous rain and muddy ground added greatly to this problem. By working from ten to sixteen hours each day, the entire task was finally completed. The wards were equipped with beds, complete with mattress, sheets, pillows, and blankets and were aligned in rows mathematically accurate as to spacing. Working supplies of drugs, extra linens, towels, and all necessary medical equipment was installed in the cabinets and cupboards according to a master plan which specified such things as the exact manner of folding and stacking the extra sheets and blankets on the shelves in the linen closet. The operating rooms were completely equipped; instruments were laid out in inspection array in the cabinets. The receiving ward, supply area, mess and recreation buildings, headquarters area and living quarters were given a final touch and everything in the entire establishment was included in an over-all inventory. This inventory consisted of listing and counting every piece of equipment from the three ton trucks down to and including each lead pencil. On December 27, the receiving ward was opened and the first patients received. The majority of patients were medical in nature and came from units stationed in the immediate surrounding area.

Toward the end of the cleaning period, it was announced that a station hospital unit would arrive soon to operate the hospital and the 77th would be transferred to another station. This news was received with considerable ill-

humor and the question was frequently heard, "What new hospital are we to scrub and polish next?"

Meanwhile, there had been some opportunity for recreation since arrival at Everleigh, and passes and furloughs were granted rather liberally. This was the first opportunity for furlough which any of the personnel had had since their induction into the army. London was the most popular place for furloughs, although Frenchay Park, Bristol and Fishponds held more attraction for many who had made friends in these cities the year before. The British and American Red Cross maintained hotel accommodations in most of the cities for personnel on leave; and in London a billeting office was operated by the army for American officers and nurses to co-ordinate hotel reservations. Mess facilities for casual and transient officers and men were also available. There was a striking difference in the number of American military personnel seen in London in December, 1943 as compared to August and September, 1942 when members of the 77th first saw London. In 1942, only occasional American uniforms were seen in the streets except in the immediate vicinity of army installations, which were few at that time. In 1943, however, it seemed at times that there were more Americans than natives in the city; the hotels, bars, restaurants and theatres were always crowded with Americans. The modest American officers' club which in 1942 boasted a small bar, lounge, and dining room and could accommodate only a handful, had given way to the "Willow-Run" of all officers' messes and had been set up in the ballroom of the Grosvenor House. A double line cafeteria service was so arranged and operated that several thousand could be efficiently served at one meal, and on a balcony which ran around three sides of the huge hall was a bar which must have been a hundred feet in length with spacious lounge facilities. Seating in the cafeteria was efficiently managed and courteous attendants prevented delay of the diners by subtle hints and reminders that others must also use the tables. Second lieutenants with sharp eyes moved about in the capacity of headwaiters; one was always on hand as each table of diners finished their meal and if so much as a fourth of a dinner roll or one bite of meat was left on a plate, the offender was reminded of the shortage of food and of shipping space to transport food. The offender's name, rank, serial number, and unit were recorded and within a few days he received a letter from Gen. Rogers stating that it had been pointed out to him that on a certain date the addressee had been observed wasting food and that such a procedure could not be tolerated. Second offenders were fined.

77th people, and probably others who had recently returned from the Mediterranean Theatre, soon developed a sense of self-consciousness in a crowd of American soldiers who had been in England long enough to acquire a pallor from lack of sunshine. These pale ones stared at the tanned and atabrine stained skins of the African veterans as one might gaze at a leper. The best defense, of course, against such rudeness consisted of throwing the chest out so that the campaign ribbon with two or three bronze stars was easily visible to the "chair-borne" tenderfoot.

A number of good stage shows were running in London as well as first-run movies, some of which had not yet been seen by American audiences in the states. Tea and evening dances were held in the ballrooms of several hotels, and service club dances were always well attended.

Besides the more formal forms of entertainment, there was, of course, a great deal of sightseeing to the historic points of interest in London; its churches, cathedrals, public buildings, and museums. Madame Tussaud's exhibition of wax figures was always a popular place to visit. Since coupons were required for articles of clothing, food, and other such items, shopping was limited to books, works of art, silver, china, and souvenirs.

Several dances were held by the enlisted men at Everleigh. Girls for the first dance were obtained chiefly by the individual efforts of the men who scoured the surrounding countryside and villages, inviting every girl with whom they came in contact. Guest attendance was poor at this dance, but as the men became better acquainted with the people of the vicinity, the turnout improved considerably. Orchestras were usually obtained from American units in the vicinity and were quite good. Refreshments, consisting of sandwiches, punch and beer were served and never failed to make an impression on the guests. The last of these parties was the most elaborate; the nurses helped with the decorations, prepared the refreshments, served as hostesses and powder room attendants, and in many ways helped make the party a huge success.

At Christmas, the men gave a party for the children of the vicinity. About thirty children, accompanied by a parent or an older brother or sister, were feted by what was probably, for many of them, the grandest party of their young lives. Each little guest was sponsored by at least one soldier who made it a point to see that his charge was given all the food he could possibly eat. To these children of war-torn and rationed England, the elaborate dinner of turkey, mashed potatoes, gravy, cranberries, dressing and pie, was an unusual sight. But when, after dinner, a huge Santa Claus (Sgt. Kenneth McConnell) began to pass out gifts of fruit, candy, chewing gum, and toys, the eyes of the youngsters became bigger and bigger as the load of gifts in their arms increased. All of the gifts had been contributed by the men from their own PX rations, and many had also given articles which they had received in packages from home. The great delight and joy of the guests was quite obvious; but it was probably no greater than the joy of giving in the hearts of the soldiers. There were several moist eyes as the party ended and the youngsters, arms loaded with gifts, expressed thanks to their hosts.

The officers' and nurses' mess took on a holiday atmosphere on Christmas Day and a very well prepared dinner of turkey and trimmings was served in a somewhat formal manner. Sheets, serving as tablecloths over the wooden tables, gave a dressed-up appearance which was elaborated by table decorations of holly, evergreen boughs, and candles. The nurses had prepared menus and place cards, which, together with colorful fruit punch in punch glasses, added enough sparkle to create a generalized holiday attitude. There were after-dinner speeches including, of course, a recapitulation of the year's activities since the Christmas dinner of vienna sausages in the red mud of Oran when one had felt thankful for a pair of galoshes and a good rain coat, and a slice of spam was a welcome respite from corned beef or vienna sausages.

As the hospital census increased and more wards were put to use, the men were moved from some of the ward buildings into the enlisted men's living quarters which were small huts with one window at each end, equipped

with double-deck bunks and a small coal stove. The hospital work became routine, the number of admissions each day remaining small, and the cases predominantly medical in nature. Little surgery was done, and the few traumatic cases were largely from traffic accidents. A total of 646 patients were admitted to the hospital during the entire period of operation.

The unit had lost several men by transfer to other units, by reclassification and by illness which necessitated their return to the Zone of the Interior; and now came thirty-three replacements to complete the enlisted quota. These men were screened rather closely for ability and training, and assigned to varied duties commensurate with their capacities. Some practical training in ward work was possible, and soon they were all well oriented and had become an integral part of the unit.

Lt. Beulah Frydendall and Maj. Tony Dillon were returned to the States from Everleigh because of illness, and their loss was keenly felt by everyone. Lt. Col. Edward Hashinger's orders were arranged, after some difficulty, so that he was able to return to the States on the "Rotation Plan"; the orders had arrived in Sicily after he had departed for England. He had been active in the early organization of the unit and had served sixteen months overseas as its executive officer.

As the time of arrival of the new unit approached, a rather spontaneous feeling developed to the effect that the 77th, so graciously received and housed by the 59th Evacuation Hospital in Palermo, might well pass on this type of hospitality to the newcomers, rather than adopting the cool attitude which prevailed toward the numerous guest units at Oran. Accordingly, a real effort was made toward giving them as warm a welcome as possible. The hospital was given an especially good shine; beds were made for the incoming nurses, officers, and men; a hot meal was ready for them; and they were even helped with their baggage. Soon after their arrival, it became obvious that they were indeed green and quite gullible. The stories by the 77th veterans became more and more wild in an attempt to see just how much the new men would believe, and even the wildest tales were swallowed readily until one could have told them the woods around the hospital were filled with German snipers and they might have believed it.

After a short period of orientation, the personnel of the newly arrived 318 Station Hospital began to assume duties on the wards of the hospital and in the service and supply sections. Soon, the entire operation was turned over to them, and the 77th entered another period of inactivity. During the ensuing days, furloughs and passes were granted freely. On January 24, 1944, the unit left Everleigh, Wilts by truck and train for Gloucester.

About twenty men were on pass to London and did not know of the move and so returned to Everleigh. Arriving at Ludgershall Station late in the evening, they walked the five miles to the hospital area where they found that the 77th had moved to Gloucester. Since they would be unable to get a train before morning, and there were no hotels available at Ludgershall, they asked permission to spend the night at the hospital. They were informed by the officer of the day that the 318th was a station hospital and not a hotel. When they asked for something to eat, having had no food since morning, they were told that all mess halls were closed and no food was available. Such inhospitality as this, from a group so recently guests of the 77th

was quite a shock to the men who felt that personal justice should have been dealt out by the same hands which bore the callouses of the scrubbing and cleaning, or that at least some sort of official disciplinary action was indicated. After walking back to Ludgershall, they spent the night in the cold station and finally arrived at Gloucester the next day, disillusioned and disgruntled, but happy to be back with friends and buddies.

An entirely new sort of life began for the 77th with arrival at Gloucester. There was no single barracks facility available which would house the unit, so plans had been made for billets in the homes of the people of Gloucester. With bobbies and British Army personnel as escorts, the 77th personnel were taken singly or in pairs to houses in the eastern part of the city where each was introduced to his landlord or landlady. In most instances, the reception was quite warm, even though forced, but in some cases, a cool formality greeted the Americans who were being more or less forced into homes where there was a known vacant room. With the knowledge that their hosts were being well paid for the use of the rooms, however they moved in with an open-faced American friendliness which soon broke down the traditional British formality and resulted in warm and happy relationships in nearly all cases. For the most part, each room in the brick and stone English houses was equipped with a fireplace, but due to the strict rationing of coal, there was usually a fire in the living-room only; and it was around this fire in the evening that the British and Americans really grew to know and understand one another well. Beds were warmed with "pigs," earthenware or metal containers filled with hot water, and in some homes the old-fashioned bed warmer, heated with live coals from the fireplace, was used to chase the chill from the sheets before retiring. The Americans shared their PX rations and gifts of food from home with their new friends, and in return were frequently invited to tea or dinner. This gesture of inviting an American to dinner was the utmost in hospitality, since this meant sharing their very strictly rationed food.

The enlisted men were fed at a mess at Reservoir Camp, a British military training camp at the edge of town. The officers' and nurses' mess was set up in Wesley Hall, a community center building of one of the churches of the city. An empty shop building in the business district was used as a headquarters building, and the small amount of unit equipment was stored in Compton Hall, another building in the industrial district.

After a few days, the training program began with new vigor. Class B, or drill uniforms were worn to breakfast, and a few minutes later, assembly was sounded and the group marched off through the streets to the drill field at the edge of town or into the surrounding country for a road march. After two or three hours of close-order drill, gas mask drill, or road marching, the group was dismissed to return to their billets and change to Class A uniforms which were required at all other times. After lunch, lectures and moving pictures of the military training type occupied the greater part of the afternoon.

One morning, after several days of practice, a formal parade and review was held at the drill field in honor of Captain Cornelius Mahoney, who was presented a Silver Star for his gallantry in action in the invasion of Sicily. His citation read, "The Silver Star was awarded, at the recommendation of the Navy, to Captain Cornelius A.



Mahoney of Forest Hills, N.Y., serving with the Army Medical Corps. The award was made for "conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity in action while serving as ship's surgeon aboard the U.S.S. LST 315 during the amphibious invasion of Sicily in July, 1943." The citation states that "when a fierce enemy attack left his vessel raging with fires and explosions, making abandonment necessary, Captain Mahoney steadfastly remained on board with utter disregard for his own personal safety to assist in transferring all wounded to another ship, leaving the stricken vessel only when his task had been accomplished. Captain Mahoney's tenacious devotion to duty and cool courage in the face of grave peril undoubtedly saved the lives of many men who otherwise might have perished and were in keeping with the highest traditions of the U.S. Naval Service. Doctor Mahoney graduated from St. Louis University School of Medicine in 1937 and entered the service in April, 1941."

Gloucester is the county town of Gloucestershire and is situated on the left bank of the River Severn, 114 miles from London. It is sheltered by the Cotswolds on the east while the Malverns and the hills of the Forest of Dean rise prominently to the west and northwest. None of the old public buildings remain in the city but New Inn in Northgate Street was built in 1450. Many visits were made by bicycle and afoot to the Bore of the Severn. This phenomenon of nature is a kind of tidal wave that rushes up a narrow estuary and rises about eighteen feet in an hour and one-half.

There was no organized recreation, but the movies, pubs, and service clubs of the city were well attended. The mess halls were also used as recreation halls, and although no specific complaints were heard from the local officials of the church building which housed the officers' and nurses' mess hall, there was probably some ill-feeling because of the small bar, radios, record players, and the bridge and poker games in the building.

During the stay at Gloucester, six of the nurses went to Bristol to the 298 General Hospital for a special course in the treatment of burns; two nurses received special training in neuropsychiatric nursing at the 312 Station Hospital; and another went to the 30th Station Hospital for the same course. The Army Nurse Corps School at Shrivenham was attended by two of the nurses for administrative training.

Time passed slowly for most of the 77th members who had always been better satisfied to work twelve hours a day than to have nothing constructive to do. The wet, cold, dreary weather of the English winter, coupled with the dull routine of the training program, gradually wore down the morale and *esprit de corps* of the entire unit. The matter of dispersal of the personnel and lack of geographic unity, was probably largely responsible for the unrest, which by the first of March had reached a rather alarming degree. The rumors had become more numerous than usual, and some of them were ugly and personal in nature. Old friendships became strained at times, and there were even a few individuals who were speaking in terms of requesting transfer to some unit which was more active and would afford an opportunity for work.

Even the war news, which came via the BBC and *Stars and Stripes*, was disheartening. Accounts of the cold, muddy, bitter struggle in the mountains of Italy, the stalemate at Cassino, the sticky business at the Benedictine

Monastery on Hill 516, and the horrible days and nights of the valiant defenders of the Anzio beachhead all poured out of the radio loudspeakers and fell on sullen and silent groups in the recreation halls at Gloucester. News from the Pacific was a little more warming at this time, but even there, progress up the long oceanic highway to Tokyo seemed very slow to the impatient ones so anxious for greater victories against the European enemy. The continuous blasting of Hitler's domain by the American and British Air Forces, furnished news items of top importance at this time and could nearly always be counted on to furnish a ray of cheer even though clouded by the Allied casualty reports. These reports of lost planes and men seemed even more vivid because of the memories of the Regensburg shuttle bombers as they limped into the airport at Bone with their cargo of wounded and dead crewmen.

During this time, Col. Samuel Cooke, who had been in command of the unit since September, 1943, was relieved of command and left to assume duties with the 58th General Hospital. The following day, Col. Dean Walker, M.C., arrived and assumed command of the unit.

About the 15th of March, several things happened to improve the morale of the unit. The weather became more clement and several days of warm sunshine had an immediate effect. Daffodils and crocuses sprang up almost overnight in the small gardens in front of the cold houses, and gave promise of an end to the cold, damp winter. Almost simultaneously, the old friendships waxed warmer, conversations and greetings were more natural, the lagging steps in close-order drill even became more sprightly, and the listless salutes picked up the old snap and sharpness they had lost.

From the townspeople came the first rumors, to the majority of the 77th people, of an imminent movement of the unit to Tunbridge Wells in southern England. A few days behind the rumors came the official announcement of the move, and on March 19 the first advance detail was sent out. A second detail was dispatched on March 24, and on April 1, 1944, the remainder of the unit departed by train for Tunbridge Wells.

In many instances, very warm friendships had grown up between the 77th members and their English hosts, and, no doubt, there was natural reluctance on the part of many to leave these new friends. Nevertheless, the promise of activity of a constructive nature held such a great appeal for all that it was with a great deal of anticipation that each man shouldered his luggage and boarded the train, glad to be finished with the dark days of Gloucester's winter.

The site which had been selected for the hospital under canvas proved to be a grassy slope at Langton Green, at the edge of the village of Rusthall, and about one and one-half miles from Tunbridge Wells, in Kent. The first advance detail which had visited the area had mapped out a tentative plan of arrangement, necessarily somewhat irregular in shape because of several houses and a road which occupied corners of the area; and the larger detail which came later had erected the living quarters tents, kitchens and messes. In the interim between the first and second advance details, a farmer had plowed a large part of the area, making the construction considerably more difficult. When inquiries were made as to why such a thing had happened, the farmer stated that he had been

under contract with the owner to plow the ground before it had been leased to the Americans, and in order not to be done out of this piece of work, he had hurried with the plowing. By the time the main group arrived on April 1, a great amount of work had been done by the advance detail. The living quarters tents were completely set up, stoves installed, fuel made available, wiring strung so that each tent had one electric light, and wash rooms had been erected complete with hot and cold running water and showers. Cinder paths, geometrically accurate, connected the tents, washrooms, latrines, and mess halls. Such luxuries as these were practically unheard of by the 77th in a tent hospital and were viewed by the new arrivals with mingled surprise, satisfaction and skepticism. The initial pride and happiness began to give way to doubt as remarks were dropped here and there to the effect that such things were too good to last and soon the old reliable steel helmets would be put to use again as bath tubs and laundry vats. Others felt that the entire set-up appeared so permanent that surely the 77th was doomed to spend the rest of its days here in the capacity of a venereal disease hospital or a convalescent station.

During the ensuing four weeks, the self-made engineers of the 77th continued to set up the entire hospital area according to the original style. Roadways were built, graded, and surfaced and even the main roadway was paved with brick from the bombed rubble heaps of the surrounding cities. Water was piped into the kitchens, and hydrants were available to the ward tents. Along the road, a snow fence was erected and painted green by a crew of nurses who volunteered for the job. The natural landscaping of trees and shrubs, roses, and other flowers added the necessary setting for such an elaborate outlay, and soon the hospital was being inspected by the medical hierarchy of American and British armies, including the Southern Base Section Surgeon, Col. Thomas; Brig. Gen. Hawley, E.T.O. Surgeon; Brig. Gen. Plank, Commanding Officer of ADSEC (Advance Section Communications Zone); and General McSheehy of the Royal Army Medical Corps. If the accomplishments of the unit as a professional team of doctors, nurses and corpsmen, earnestly doing their utmost to render the best possible medical care to sick and wounded, had failed to make an impression on the higher command; so, by the same token, their efforts as engineers and landscapers apparently won praise from high places and the hospital became known as the showplace of field type hospitals. There was little or no apparent interest in such problems as the time and man-power involved in the erection of such an establishment, nor in the ability of such a unit to move rapidly in the field in combat conditions.

Several worthwhile improvements in the hospital's ultimate utility and flexibility were made, however. Since all the hospital equipment was new, a complete set of packing crates had to be constructed. After considerable time and effort, well-built packing boxes were made for each ward, the lumber coming from airplane motor crates and the workmanship from the 77th carpenters aided and augmented by a detail of carpenters with power saws from a battalion of American engineers. These crates were so constructed that when unpacked, they could be set on end or stacked one on another, shelves put in place, and the open side hung with muslin curtains to form linen cabinets, medicine cabinets, bedpan and urinal lockers, and other necessary storage units.

Thus each ward unit, consisting of two ward tents connected end to end, had its complete set of furniture while in operation; and the same furniture served as packing crates for cots, mattresses, sheets, blankets, enamel ware, and a working supply of instruments and medications. Each crate was marked with the unit code device as well as a marking to indicate the ward to which it belonged and its contents. The mark "M2-8" meant that the crate belonged to medical ward number two and contained drugs, thermometers, drinking tubes, hypodermic syringes and needles, and when unpacked, formed a medicine cabinet with an inner, locking compartment for narcotics. "S6-2" marked a crate belonging to surgical ward number six, contained fourteen blankets, and when empty, formed the bottom section of the three section linen cabinet. The time and effort spent in devising this standardized method of packing proved to be of the utmost value in later activities.

By April 27, the hospital was opened for patients and during the next month a total of 419 patients were admitted. Those admitted to the medical service were chiefly from units stationed in the surrounding area and consisted, for the most part, of respiratory diseases. The surgical cases were largely non-traumatic surgical diseases or minor injuries. A few severely wounded cases, casualties from the battle in the air, came directly from emergency landing strips in the vicinity or were transferred by ambulance to the 77th from British hospitals on the channel coast in the vicinity of Canterbury.

The light load of hospital work made it possible to rotate the personnel on duty and only a skeleton crew was actually on duty at any one time. For the remainder of the unit, time was divided between recreation and a training program of close order drill, road marches, and gas mask drill. Considerable emphasis was placed on defense against gas attack at this time, and new equipment was issued in many instances to replace worn or defective articles. Lectures and quiz sections on the detection of and defense against the various weapons of chemical warfare were designed to prepare each officer, nurse, and man to be able to best prevent himself from becoming a casualty in the event the enemy used this dreaded type of warfare. A curious type of psychology had developed regarding the use of chemical agents. It was considered highly improbable that the enemy would use such methods since he had been informed that any such measures would be countered by a very large scale chemical operation by the United Nations. This ultimatum was backed by the obvious overwhelming superiority of the Allies in the air, and apparently by the more subtle threat of allowing intentional leaks to the enemy's espionage agents concerning the great stock piles of chemical warfare equipment and ammunition quickly available for use by the Allies. Meanwhile, every man was furnished with the best protective equipment available. Several crews were specially trained in the erection and operation of a decontaminating station and plans laid so that the best possible professional service could be rendered casualties who might have suffered both gunshot wounds and gas injuries.

All motorized equipment used in the coming invasion was to be waterproofed, and a detachment of men from the motor-pool, under command of Capt. Gordon Voorhees, was sent to a regional school in waterproofing tactics. By means of lectures, movies, practical demonstrations and actual practice, this crew soon became capable

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ERECTING A MODEL FIELD HOSPITAL

of completely waterproofing a vehicle so that it could be driven through the practice wading ponds with only its breather pipe showing above the surface of the water. All sorts of conjectures and imaginative circumstances grew out of the waterproofing project; and one cartoonist even suggested that, lacking ships, an invading armada of tanks, armoured cars, and other vehicles could be driven across the floor of the English Channel.

During the liberal off-duty hours, the Americans swarmed the countryside. Few Americans had been in this section of England before, and the 77th was quite graciously received both informally in the homes of the area, at public dances, theatres and other places of entertainment in Tunbridge Wells, and more formally at a party for officers and nurses given by the local medical society.

As a gesture toward returning the hospitality of the British people, the 77th officers' and nurses' club gave a dance which seemed to be attended by about half the people of the city and apparently was immensely enjoyed by all of them. A very generous supply of spirits, greatly in excess of the rationed amount, had been purchased in time for the party through a dealer who had become friendly with several officers of the unit. None was left when the party ground to a stop at a late hour. A number of officers and nurses had been invited to breakfast the following morning at the home of a prominent citizen of the community, but only a few were able to attend. This function was in honor of the host's house guest, Bebe Daniels, who was on a week-end leave from her London show, "Panama Hattie," and her husband, Ben Lyon, an American army officer. Later in the day, the two celebrities visited the hospital where Bebe passed through the wards and left bouquets of flowers for the patients.

The enlisted men held a dance at the sumptuous Spa Hotel ballroom with its glittering chandeliers and mirrored walls. There was a good orchestra, ample refreshments and enough girls to make the evening a huge success.

While at Tunbridge Wells, Cpl. Herbert Eldridge and Lt. Grace West, A.N.C., were married at a quiet but very lovely ceremony. Since army regulations prohibit married couples from serving in the same unit, they were transferred to separate units. Sgt. Joseph Kohut, Pfc. Ed Thompson, and T/4 Kenneth Michael were also married to English girls during the period at Tunbridge Wells.

In mingling with the natives, it was learned that Tunbridge Wells had been a popular resort and watering place for royal and distinguished patronage since the 17th century. It owes its popularity to the "Pantiles," medicinal springs situated at the end of the fine parade, and to its picturesque setting on detached hills which provide excellent views of the countryside. Tunbridge-ware, consisting of fine inlaid work or mosaics, is sold everywhere and known internationally. The common is quite extensive, contains 170 acres, and includes the club house and field of a rather famous cricket club. It was at this field where many of the 77th personnel saw their first cricket game. In general, the game was viewed with more curiosity than enthusiasm, and the majority of the American spectators felt that the game was quite dull compared to baseball. An equal amount of curiosity and probably considerably more enthusiasm was shown by the English spectators who attended the softball games on the diamond at the edge of the hospital area. Within a few days after the evening games began, several regular British fans could be seen in

the crowd at the games; and within a remarkably short time, their polite applause had given way to a more conventional manner of cheering their favorites and heckling the umpire.

Within five minutes from camp by bus was the fine old Spa Hotel which maintained a rather sporty nine-hole golf course where clubs could be rented and a few golf-balls of somewhat inferior quality were available. Many of the golfers remarked on the ease with which excellent greens could be maintained due to the mild weather and generous rainfall. The month of May in Tunbridge Wells was, by all odds, the most enjoyable weather the 77th had seen in its two visits to England, and several people were heard to admit that they could almost forgive and forget the cold, damp and dreary weather of the past winter.

Morale was running high in almost all quarters in spite of the lack of actual professional work. The immediate prospect of the coming invasion furnished a definite goal, and the general feeling was that once the invasion began, Hitler's armies would be crushed rapidly and the war in Europe brought to a victorious finish. Announcement was made of the assignment of the unit to ADSEC, and on May 10 the unit was put on a forty-eight hour alert. On May 27, the hospital was officially closed and all patients were turned over to the 6th Field Hospital. Newly arrived from the states, minus its nurses, this unit had previously served in Alaska on Kiska Island. Numerous useful hints and ideas were exchanged between the two units, and as one veteran to another, the most cordial relations prevailed.

The unit's equipment had been gradually and laboriously built-up during the period at Tunbridge Wells and now was not only complete, but included a number of useful items not listed in the *Tables of Equipment*. Armed with official requisitions and letters of introduction from Col. Walker, and spurred on by serious rebuke at failure, Lt. Earl Hoard, supply officer, had become an avid and voracious procurer of useful, if not authorized articles; and the unit now boasted such equipment as a substantial number of compartmented serving trays for patients, a complete supply of new or near new tentage, and a large diesel electric generator. Various other items, for which the need had been sorely felt in previous activities but which had always been denied, now rested snug in their crates, clearly marked with the 77th's new code numbers, 31999 and 32000.

Suspense and anticipation regarding the invasion gradually heightened and the size and frequency of the formations of large and medium bombers, which seemed to fill the sky at all times, increased day by day until there seemed to be little doubt in any mind that this must indeed be the softening up process in preparation for the invasion. On about June 5, it was announced that all Allied aircraft would assume new identification markings when the invasion began, and during the afternoon of the same day, a few fighter craft were seen bearing black and white stripes on each wing near the fuselage, and similar stripes encircling the fuselage in front of the tail assembly. From that time on, radios were kept continually tuned to BBC for any fragments of news of D-day. The following morning, June 6, 1944, came the first communiques of the landings in Normandy, and all through the day came the isolated and incomplete fragments of the news regarding the early hours of the invasion by air and sea; the invasion which

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was probably the greatest single military operation of all history.

The forty-eight hour alert basis, which had existed for the 77th since May 29, now took on a more real meaning. A concerted effort was made to impress all personnel with the importance of scaling their hand luggage down to a weight which they could actually carry by hand; since it was anticipated that all barracks bags, hand bags, and musette bags might need to be carried considerable distances. Several dry runs were staged in which each officer, nurse and man was required to line up with his hand luggage and march around the area long enough to get a practical idea of how much his baggage actually weighed. To those who had made the long trek from Mers el Kebir to Oran's Civil Hospital, such a procedure was probably unnecessary, but for some others who had never carried their luggage more than a few feet at a time, this exercise was quite valuable.

On the night of June 15, a peculiar phenomenon was witnessed. Shortly before taps, an air-raid alert was sounded by the sirens in the surrounding cities and villages, and almost immediately a roaring noise was heard from low in the sky. All lights were put out and many stepped out-

side their tents to see the source of the unusual sound. Passing almost directly over camp, at a relatively low altitude, was some sort of contraption; the outlines of which were quite indistinct in the dark. From its tail came spurts of flame in a rhythmic manner, accompanied by the sounds of the individual explosions of its motor. Many theories as to the nature of the device were being offered in animated conversation during the next few minutes when in the vicinity of London, thirty-five miles to the north, a bright flash lit the sky and about one and one-half minutes later came the sound of the explosion. During the night, several more of the objects were seen passing over or near the camp and several more were heard but not seen. Always, minutes later, came the flash and sound of the explosion in London. Daylight the next morning, brought the first respite from the missiles and the first radio communique announcing the bombardment of the London area by German V-1 guided missiles which soon became known as "buzz bombs." During the next few days and nights, a nearly constant stream of buzz-bombs streaked through the sky toward London. Langton Green seemed to be directly in the path from the launching ramps at Pas de Calais, France to the London area.



The area around Tunbridge Wells had always been in a zone of fighter plane defense against air attack and there was immediately a concentrated effort by the fighter groups to shoot down the bombs before they reached London. Ordinary fighter planes were too slow to keep up



FRAGMENTS OF EXPLODED BUZZ BOMB

with the four hundred mile-an-hour bombs, and even the American-made Mustang (P-51) and the latest model Spitfire XVI's were not quite fast enough to catch the missiles. Then the fighter planes were ordered to be stripped of their armor and all unnecessary external fittings, their paint was removed and outer surfaces polished. The extra thirty mile-an-hour speed made it possible for the planes to keep up with the bombs. Fighter pilots tried shooting from the side, from head-on and from behind the buzz-bombs. Eighteen planes were damaged and six men killed because they flew too close before firing and got caught by the bomb's explosion when it was hit. Some pilots in the outer defense ring over the channel, locked wingtips with the buzz-bombs and tipped them into the sea. Occasionally, a blast from a fighter's guns would hit the gyro steering mechanism in the tail of the buzz-bombs without exploding the war head. This usually resulted in the bomb diving to earth and exploding on contact with the ground. One such bomb, its steering mechanism awry, approached the 77th area in a spiral of wide looping gyrations; barely clearing the tent tops as it passed over the camp, it made one more complete loop and struck ground in a field just outside Rusthall. Within a few days, several of the missiles had fallen and exploded within a mile of the 77th, and there were few intact windows left in the houses and shops of the surrounding country. The tile roofs also bore evidence of the terrific concussion of the bombs and appeared to have been ruffled by some giant hand.

Fighter plane defense was only moderately effective and a "fence" of barrage balloons was erected in what appeared to be the center of the lane of flight. This device trapped only a few bombs before the enemy raised the altitude of the flight enough to clear the fence. The increased altitude made the bombs more susceptible to anti-aircraft guns. These guns put an end to any attempts at sleep for the 77th, since their noise was much more disturbing than the bombs themselves. Furthermore, after each salvo of ack-ack fire, a shower of small fragments of flack fell on the tent roofs like hail. One large fragment ripped through a tent roof and buried itself in the ground, barely missing the head of Lt. Marvin Bowers trying to sleep on his cot. Sometimes a lull of several

hours or even a whole day gave evidence of the accuracy of the Allied bombing raids on the storage places and launching ramps for the buzz-bombs in France, and toward the end of the stay at Langton Green, relatively few were seen.

Toward the end of June, two new correspondents, Doris Fleeson of the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, and Duke Shoop of the *Kansas City Star*, were attached to the unit for rations and transportation. Shoop, not wishing to be caught out of training by a long march in the movement to France, acquired a pair of new G. I. shoes and lined up with the officers' group for a road march one morning. After the march, one roll of three-inch adhesive tape easily covered his blisters and he became a little discouraged about walking. He did send home considerable copy and many pictures of the unit to the *Star* which were published in a feature article.

On the morning of June 28, the entire unit was taken by truck to Tunbridge Station and boarded train for Eastleigh, Hants. From there, the officers and men went by truck to staging area C-5 and the nurses to area C-22, about fifteen miles from Southampton. Life was dull in the staging area where reading, card playing and movies served poorly to offset the strict confinement to the immediate area. The food, however, was good. Here were issued gas proof impregnated clothing, anti-seasick pills, small paper bags for use if the pills were not effective, fuel tablets, and halozen tablets for chlorine sterilization of water in canteens. English money, of which there was little left in the unit, was turned in for Allied invasion francs; and all enlisted men received a partial payment of two hundred francs.

EVERLEIGH PROMOTIONS AND COMMISSIONS

JANUARY, 1944:

TO TECHNICIAN 3RD GRADE—Lloyd B. Douthit and Virgil D. Jakeway.

TO TECHNICIAN 4TH GRADE—Victor L. Korsak, George J. Meeker, Earl C. Modrall, and Vernon C. Starr.

TO CORPORAL—Lamon W. Bethune and Walter V. Haloski.

TO TECHNICIAN 5TH GRADE—Harry W. Benfield, Robert M. Buchholz, Clifford E. Clark, Robert V. Dowding, Edward T. Scully, and Elmer L. Seabolt.

JOINED THE UNIT

JANUARY, 1944:

Pfc. George W. H. Blaser, Jr., Pfc. Earl J. Brown, Pfc. James E. Clark, Pfc. Michael E. Cocosa, Pvt. J. S. Crean, Pfc. Dean L. Cross, Pfc. Thomas J. Czarny, Pvt. Carl G. Culver, T/5 Frank Denaro, Pvt. Eugene H. Dubeau, T/5 Paul E. Erb, Pfc. Pierre T. Eno, Pfc. Clifford Essen, T/5 Alfred J. Fidel, Pfc. Henry G. Garruto, Pfc. Frank B. Greene, Pfc. James W. Harper, Pfc. Edward Jensen, Pfc. Edward Marzoa, Pfc. Patrick F. Nicoletto, Pfc. Frederick J. Novicki, Pfc. Francis O'Meara, Jr., Pfc. Walter Orletsky, Pfc. Harry C. Parsons, Pfc. Gaspare G. Panciocco, Pfc. Anthony P. Pinto, Pfc. Gordon W. Ranney, Pvt. Welty Roof, Pfc. Joseph T. Schmidt, Pfc. Homer D. Seitz, Pfc. Rufus M. Shelor, Pfc. Kermit M. Ward, and Pfc. John W. Watterson.

LEFT THE UNIT

SEPTEMBER, 1943:

T/5 Harry M. Hoover to hospital.

NOVEMBER, 1943:

Lt. Col. Edward J. Hashinger, M.C., to States.

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DECEMBER, 1943:

Major Tony G. Dillon, M.C., to hospital; Capt. Harris F. Birely, M.C., to 261st Medical Battalion; 1st Lt. John D. Bayle, Q.M.C., to Hdqs. S.B.S.; 1st Lt. Beulah H. A. Frydendall, A.N.C., to hospital; Pvt. John O. Pennell to hospital.

GLOUCESTER PROMOTIONS AND COMMISSIONS

FEBRUARY, 1944:

TO CAPT. M.A.C.—Edgar E. Smith.

JOINED THE UNIT

JANUARY, 1944:

Capt. Raymond Katzen, M.C.

FEBRUARY, 1944:

Col. Dean M. Walker, M.C., Capt. Oren D. Boyce, M.C., Capt. Walter R. Floyd, CH.P., and Capt. Louis J. Millman, M.C.

MARCH, 1944:

Capt. William Gautschi, D.C.

LEFT THE UNIT

JANUARY, 1944:

Capt. Harwin J. Brown to the 130th General Hospital.

FEBRUARY, 1944:

Col. S. L. Cook, M.C., to 58th General Hospital; Capt. Howard H. Dukes, D.C., to 20th Combat Engineers; Capt. John Ridout, CH.P., to the 2913 D.T.C.

MARCH, 1944:

Capt. Tom R. Hamilton, M.C., to 1st Medical General Lab.; Mary G. Sternbergh, A.R.C., to A.R.C. Clubmobile Section, London; T/5 Salvatore Trapani to the 3113 Signal Service Battalion.

TUNBRIDGE WELLS PROMOTIONS AND COMMISSIONS

APRIL, 1944:

TO CAPT.—Bessie Walker.

TO 1ST LT.—Dorothy L. Gillette and Esther J. Sipple.

TO TECHNICAL SERGEANT—Melvin G. Streckfuss.

TO TECHNICIAN 3RD GRADE—Herbert M. Fritzsche and Lillburn H. Lay.

TO SERGEANT—Bernard Colbert.

TO TECHNICIAN 4TH GRADE—Arthur L. Fincannon and Jason B. Kesselring.

TO CORPORAL—Kenneth F. Smith and Lamon W. Bethune.

TO TECHNICIAN 5TH GRADE—William J. Maggary and Rudolph G. Wolff.

APRIL 28, 1944:

TO TECHNICIAN 3RD GRADE—Robert J. Gerlach, George G. Nick and Arthur F. Zimmers.

TO TECHNICIAN 4TH GRADE—Robert M. Buchholz, Clifford C. Clark, and Giovanni D'Amico.

TO CORPORAL—George A. Jarvis and Joseph L. Skoda.

TO TECHNICIAN 5TH GRADE—R. J. England, Robert M. Hofele, John W. Woodard and Horace C. Harrell.

JUNE, 1944:

TO 1ST LT. A.N.C.—Ruth D. Abernathy, Mary C. Bortz, Mary J. Elliott, Erma K. Mace, Doris L. Steiner, Dorothy V. Sydenstricker, and Irene M. Weisbender.

TO 1ST LT. M.A.C.—Ellsworth A. Frederick.

JOINED THE UNIT

APRIL, 1944:

2nd Lt. Lisbeth C. Kaufman, A.N.C., Pfc. Charles Davis, Jr., T/3 Ellis F. Jackson, and Pfc. William H. Sherwood.

MAY, 1944:

Capt. Ira P. Burdine, M.C., Capt. David S. Greenspun, M.C., Capt. Walter J. Olzewski, M.C., Capt. R. W. Postlethwait, M.C., 1st Lt. John G. Shellito, M.C., 2nd Lt. Nancy J. Sittig, A.N.C., Mary R. Ransom, A.R.C., Pfc. Isidore Besser, Pfc. Gerald J. Blau, T/3 Henry D. Curtiss, Pfc. Mesrob K. Kaloustain, T/5 John W. Penko, and Pfc. Walter H. Kraus.

JUNE, 1944:

Maj. Edwin S. Wright, M.C., 2nd Lt. Frances R. Holt, A.N.C., Louise Eisenstaedt, A.R.C., T/5 William C. Davis, Pfc. Chester R. Ingils, Pfc. Chun G. Way, Pfc. Harry D. Woodworth, and Cpl. William T. Salter.

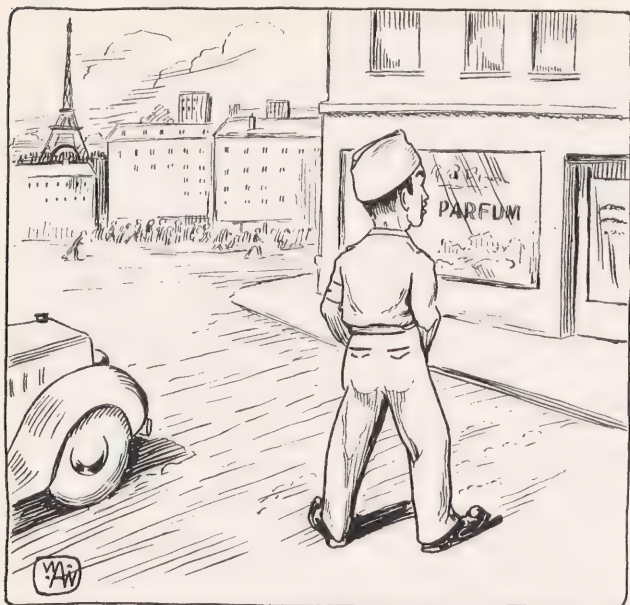
LEFT THE UNIT

APRIL, 1944:

Capt. Cornelius A. Mahoney to Ass't Military Attache, London; 2nd Lt. Margaret L. Neumann to the hospital, and 2nd Lt. Virginia L. Thuss to the 97th Evac. Hosp.; Pvt. Clyde L. Bailey, Pvt. Angus D. Brown, T/5 Charles Christmas, Pvt. Forrest Dail, Pvt. James E. Ewing, Pvt. Noble R. Falk, Pfc. Joseph O. Hayes, Pvt. Leslie R. Hudson and T/5 John Kammerer to the hospital; T/4 Joseph Kohut to the 110th Station Hosp.; Pvt. Bert D. Lamm, Pvt. Abe Lipson, Pvt. Arpha E. Reed, Pvt. Welty Roof, Pvt. Leo E. Schmelz, Pvt. Alvin C. Slaughter, and T/3 Gordon G. Weber to the hospital; Pvt. T. J. Mooneyham to the 48th Gen. Hosp.; T/5 Edwin W. Shaffer to the 32nd Armd. Inf. BN; Pvt. Otha S. Smith to the 4286 Q.M. Co.; S/Sgt. Henry Smith to the 110th Station Hosp.

MAY, 1944:

1st Lt. Oscar J. Milnor, T/5 Harold W. Rasmussen and T/5 Robert D. Stein to the hospital; 2nd Lt. Grace G. Bave to the 5th Gen. Hosp. and 2nd Lt. Grace G. West to the States.



Chapter VII

AFTER a week in the barbed wire enclosure of the staging areas, the unit went by way of truck to the edge of the dock area of Southampton. During a two and one-half hour wait in the streets, coffee and doughnuts were served from a Red Cross clubmobile and a U.S. Special Service unit passed out paper backed books and other reading material for use on the channel crossing. Under a hot sun in mid-afternoon, the unit was finally marched through the busy streets and up the gang-plank of *H.M.T. Empire Lance*, a small British transport. Quarters were clean and consisted of large compartments of hanging steel bunks, without other furnishings, but entirely adequate for the short crossing.

The convoy moved across the unusually smooth surface of the English Channel without incident or evidence of enemy action. Traffic lanes were marked by buoys along the various routes.

On July 7, 1944, about three o'clock in the afternoon the *Empire Lance* arrived off Utah Beach on the coast of Normandy in France. In the area surrounding the anchorage were numerous ships, and not all of these were afloat; the gray bow, a smoke stack, or only the side of a ship sticking out of the water gave silent witness to the invasion a month previously. Many of these ships had been scuttled in order to form a breakwater for the artificial harbor, as the most severe storm in years had raged two days after the invasion. On the beach were seen the concrete pillboxes which the Germans had built during the years of occupation; the shell-holes in many of the houses and roads along the beach gave further evidence of the invasion that had passed that way. In the distance was seen the smoke from burning ships hit the night before by enemy bombs. The guns of every ship were manned, and even on some of the wrecks a gun crew had remained to operate any anti-aircraft artillery which would still function. Yet the barrage balloons floating lazily above the ships at anchor, the blue, lightly-clouded sky, the rainbows formed by the sunshine on the saltwater spray, and the

peaceful green rolling countryside in the distance suggested anything but the hell and death and destruction the area had experienced such a short time before.

The Higgins boats scooted back and forth seeming to ignore the hospital group as they waited impatiently to be unloaded. Finally they, too, were ordered into the landing craft. The hospital personnel had previously been divided into two groups capable of functioning separately, as it had been intended that the two groups would travel on different boats. As planned, the lines of men had formed below decks, and they came up and boarded the landing craft rapidly without confusion. The height of the bottom of the landing craft from the catwalk was very deceptive as many learned when they jumped down, to have their pack follow at just the right interval to strike them in the back when least expected. The first twenty or so men into each craft were given seats, a privilege they were later to regret. The seats were about four inches off the bottom of the boat and were placed well back under the shelf forming the catwalk. This afforded protection for assault troops, but for those in this group provided a poor vantage point to watch what was going on as they made for shore. A smaller number of the more fortunate ones were allowed to stand in the center of the boat; this not only gave a view of the beach, but also decreased the tendency to seasickness. Conversation at this point was not especially stimulating as there were several who were green both in color and feeling. The first contingents ashore were able to land on the floating steel dock, while later groups had to wade several hundred feet, because the tide went out so rapidly that the landing boats could not approach closely. A short walk from the dock, across



DEBARKING FROM AN ASSAULT BOAT ONTO
A FLOATING STEEL DOCK

the beach and between sand dunes, brought the group to the assembly area where the beachmaster indicated the line of march to the bivouac area. Thus the 77th arrived in France.

The unit was instructed to bivouac for the night in Transit Area B at Ste. Germaine de Verreville, and the nurses and advance party were sent ahead in trucks while the remainder of the personnel, led by Colonel Walker, followed on foot. A detail of men was left to guard the duffel bags and bedding rolls, and later in the evening, when the vehicles belonging to the unit were landed on this same dock, the luggage was loaded and taken to Transit Area B. Meanwhile the officers and men on foot were on

their way. It was during this hike that they first saw the two signs which were found to be more numerous in France than the signs of a certain shaving cream are at home. One "Mines cleared to hedges only," and the other "Minen"; both were highly respected. Miles of white tape defined accurately the safe area, so no difficulty was encountered in following the proper trail. The march was about seven miles in length and the training undergone in England proved its value, as only one five minute break was taken during the hike, and a group of men preceding an infantry detachment heard the infantry lieutenant remark, "These are the first troops who have ever outwalked my men, and these fellows are just medics." The weather on arrival had verified the stories about sunny Normandy, but the unit had gone only about three miles when it began to rain. Cold driving sheets of rain, slogging along a narrow muddy country road, and a pack that gained weight with every step reminded the men of familiar stories told by other Americans of the France they saw in 1917-1918. Capt. Voorhees by this time was fairly staggering under the weight of his pack and other equipment which included an emergency sleeping bag. After the men were thoroughly soaked, the rain stopped, and the sunshine returned just as they reached a well-paved road. On the main road a constant stream of trucks passed as empty ones returned to the beaches, and the vehicles loaded with ammunition, gasoline and rations sped toward the front. On every third or fourth truck a machine gun was ready for action. The gunners stood on the seats or sat on the roof of the cab, alert for hostile aircraft. Avoiding the passing trucks as well as possible, the group of medics finally received the right-of-way and turned off across the road into Ste. Germaine de Verreville, which was about four miles inland.

The bivouac area, located in an apple orchard bordered by hedgerows, was staffed by French children with shopping bags into which went all gifts of K-ration, candy and gum. To the members of the unit, this was their personal invasion of France, but to the children this was all very familiar for they had been through D-day and seen all the troops who had followed. To them the hospital personnel were probably just more "sources of supply." These children were to become very familiar sights, as were the P-47's which buzzed overhead, the empty C and K ration cans, and the wrecked enemy equipment. A neighboring church showed battle scars in the partially demolished steeple, and several of the nearby houses had also been hit. Foxholes had been dug all over the area, but there were no latrine facilities available which necessitated rapid improvisation to construct a nurses' latrine. The men of the detail had heated water for making broth or coffee and the K ration supper was quickly consumed. The barracks bags and bed rolls having arrived from the beach, the problem of setting up the pup tents was now approached. For the old timers this was no problem at all, but for most of the nurse and officer replacements who had joined the unit in England, it was a complex affair. Several of the nurses solved everything by opening their bed rolls and sliding in, trusting to luck that it would rain no more than night.

In the early morning hours an artillery barrage was heard in the distance. All were up early and packing was completed long before noon. In the usual orderly manner the area was policed thoroughly, a task which had not been done by any outfit occupying the area previously, and

a number of the foxholes were filled in with the accumulated trash.

Without advance notice, a group of three surgical teams were ordered out on detached service to the 67th Evacuation Hospital. The officers and nurses left immediately to be followed later by the men. The 67th Evacuation Hospital, assigned to the First Army, was a 400 bed unit which had arrived on D+17 and had been working constantly since that time. Although two auxiliary surgical teams had been with them, more help was badly needed, and within a few days it was necessary to attach other personnel from the 77th, including ward officers and nurses. At the 67th, the hospital was overloaded with patients so that an operative backlog of about 200 existed, and the utmost exertion was needed to catch up and maintain the operative rate with that of the admission rate. Two shifts were at work, changing at noon and midnight. The personnel had been under the strain of this exacting and pressing work for eighteen days, so that the teams from the 77th were an injection of much needed, fresh personnel. The attached teams worked continuously for long hours. Several outstanding instances are worth mention. One ward, used exclusively for gas gangrene cases, the majority being prisoners of war, was under the direction of Capt. Melvin Rabe, Capt. Glenn C. Franklin, Lt. Enid Wherely, and Lt. Violet Mahan. These patients were very ill, as they had lain untreated several days until taken prisoner. A number of amputations were necessary and the several types of medication, both oral and parenteral, required a great increase over the usual amount of nursing care. Despite the illness of the patients and the obvious difficulties in treatment, the ward was soon put in order and the patients made comfortable by these officers and nurses. There was little doubt that many lives were saved purely because of the attention and care these patients received.

Three teams worked in the operating room and by their work and application helped reduce the backlog immeasurably. The team under Maj. Wayne C. Bartlett operated on an average of twenty-five patients during each twelve-hour period, including their share of the difficult and complicated cases. Capt. Ira P. Burdine, Capt. Robert Forsythe, Lt. Esther Sipple and Lt. Nancy Sittig were assigned to the ward for abdominal cases, and long hours were spent adjusting the gastric suction sets, changing the abdominal dressings, and administering intravenous medication. During this time the 67th was inspected by Secretary of War Henry L. Stimson, and Lt. General George S. Patton, Jr., Lt. General Omar N. Bradley, and Major General Albert W. Kenner. Finally the hospital stopped admissions in preparation to going into bivouac, and on July 19 the personnel from the 77th returned to their own hospital.

Three other groups were sent out on detached service during the period before the equipment arrived; and the complete list was: 67th Evacuation Hospital: Majors Wayne C. Bartlett, Thomas G. Duckett and Wendell A. Grosjean; Captains George Ashley, Robert Newman, Melvin Rabe, Raymond W. Postlethwait, Nihil K. Venis, Robert Forsythe, Glenn C. Franklin and Ira P. Burdine; Lieutenants John G. Shellito, Enid Wherley, Esther Sipple, Irene Weisbender, Gladys Fitzgerald, Marie Heine, Violet Mahan, Elaine Schuler and Nancy Sittig; T/4 Clarence Christian, T/5 Adolf Wild, and Pfc. Arndt Fiechtner; at the 128th Evacuation Hospital: Lieutenants Margaret S.

John, Florence Hanson, Ruth Abernathy, Helen Bailey, Dorothy Downs, Lillian Hoch, Lisbeth Kaufman, Mary Kempster, Thelma Keough, Frances Lake, Elizabeth McGrogan, Mae Ramsey, Irene Rohr, Clio Shirley and Mary Ziroff; at the 96th Evacuation Hospital: Lieutenants Mary Bortz, Mary Elliott, Doris Steiner, Dorothy Osgood, Esther Curphey, Mary Ewing, Mary Gogel, Elizabeth Hagins, Marjorie Hart, Sarah Leach, Helen McIntosh, Virginia McIntosh, Marie Paik and Josephine Zeman; at the 44th Evacuation Hospital: Lieutenants Erma Mace, Clara Dambach, Louise Gilliland, Ruth Holt, Gladys Perdue and Beverly Wiggins; T/3 Henry Curtiss, T/5 Reid L. Cox, T/5 Rollin Jerome, and T/5 Franklin Dee.

In every unit to which personnel of the 77th was attached, they were gladly received and started work almost immediately because the patient load for the hospitals at this time was very heavy. The Cotentin peninsula had been cut by the American divisions and, driving back to the north, Cherbourg had been taken on the 26th of June. The beachhead was no longer front and the movement inland had begun. The objectives ran from Coutances on the west through St. Lo. The 79th Division, with the 90th Division on its left heading southwest, drove to the west of La Haye-du-Puits, pinching out the 82nd Airborne Division which had fought to the top of Hill 131 overlooking the town. The 79th Division took the town from the west after repulsing repeated counter-attacks, and the 79th, 90th, and 8th Infantry Divisions pushed into the enemy's main defense positions on the northern banks of the Ay River. The 4th and 83rd Infantry Divisions moved down the Caretan-Periers road and by the 12th of June cleaned



A WRECKED GLIDER IN NORMANDY

up St. Eny Hill, an enemy salient sticking out against the Americans southwest of Carentan. The 9th and 30th Infantry Divisions came up from Cherbourg and went directly into the line. In all this fighting, over rolling terrain with every field bordered by a protective hedgerow, against an enemy plentifully supplied with artillery and clever in its use, a certain number of casualties had to be accepted. Adequate hospital facilities were available, as even a higher casualty rate had been expected and accordingly prepared for.

Two ambulance platoons from the 563rd Ambulance Battalion, commanded by Lt. George Lahey, had arrived and provided transportation to move the remainder of the personnel and their luggage to a new bivouac site west

of Ste. Mere-Eglise. Here a pup tent camp was set up in three adjoining fields with the enlisted men and transportation in one field, officers, nurses, mess, supply and headquarters in another, and the ambulance platoons in the third. During the first few days, "scrounging" was a large scale activity in an effort to find material to increase the comfort of the quarters. To provide doors for the pup tents, the bottoms of rubber landing boats were secured. Varnished spruce from crashed gliders and boards from



PUP TENT AREA AT STE. MERE-EGLISE

155 mm. shell boxes were used for floors, stands and benches, and pneumatic life belts were found to make excellent pillows and cushions. In their enthusiasm for "scrounging" nearly everyone ran afoul of the area-limits boundary, and on one occasion the men had close order drill for this reason.

A nearby field had been selected for occupation by the hospital and while waiting for the equipment to arrive, this site was cleaned up. There were numerous shell craters which had to be filled in, as the paratroopers and glider infantry of the 82nd Airborne Division had landed in this area; there had been some of the most intensive fighting by these troops in the hedgerow bordered fields before they took Ste. Mere-Eglise, the first town in France to be liberated. Foxholes, packs, shell cases, canteens and ration boxes were scattered in profusion, and in the hedgerows were the discarded clothing and equipment of both Americans and Germans. Even parts of bodies were seen, and in one corner of the field was the former site of a battalion aid station, as evidenced by dirty dressings, torn emergency

medical tags, bloody sponges, a discarded pack riddled with bullets, and a boot with part of a leg still in it. Numerous bare spots indicated where the parachutes were buried. "Rommel's asparagus patches" were noted in several surrounding fields, so-called because of the innumerable poles sticking out of the ground to prevent the gliders from landing. After all this discarded equipment and debris had been cleared up, latrines were dug, the hospital roads marked out and work started on them.

The delay during this time was caused by the failure of the equipment to arrive. Lt. Earl Hoard had been left at Tunbridge Wells with the equipment, which was later loaded by the men of the 6th Field Hospital and sent by train to Southampton. There Lt. Hoard found that no boat had been assigned and it was not until the morning of July 3 that the loading was started. The ship, the *Denbigh Coast*, left Southampton the following day, crossed the channel during the night, and arrived off Omaha Beach about nine o'clock on the morning of July 5. Lt. Hoard was permitted to go ashore but was not allowed to contact the unit or Advance Section Headquarters; he was sent back to the ship and remained aboard on reduced rations for the next ten days. On the fifteenth of July the ship was ordered to Utah Beach where unloading was started at five-thirty that evening and completed about seven-thirty the next morning.

The equipment was rapidly hauled from the beach to the selected site, and thirty-six hours after the first truckload arrived, the hospital was completely set up and ready to receive patients. The hospital plan used here was the result of the experience in six installations in Africa and Sicily, and of careful planning during the stay in England. The disposition of the various tents and departments provided a highly efficient functional arrangement. Knowing the exact amount of space needed, the advance party staked off the roads, erected the signs, and placed a marking peg at the right front corner of the location to be occupied by each tent. A curved driveway formed an entrance and exit to the hospital and in this enclosed loop the headquarters tents were erected. The camp was divided into four sections. In the center section on the main driveway were the receiving tents, Red Cross, x-ray, pharmacy and laboratory, electric generators, and patient's mess. The medical service occupied the section on one side of the center, and the surgical service the other, while the supply department and enlisted men's mess were in the rear. The living quarters were placed at the most convenient site around the periphery, and at this particular location, the officers' area was at the end of the row of surgical ward tents, the nurses' area behind the supply department, and the enlisted men's area at the end of the row of medical ward tents. When completely set up the hospital used 189 tents: 71 ward, 95 pyramidal, 7 storage, 6 squad, 8 small wall, and 2 large wall, having an aggregate cost of \$21,334.06. All of these tents, if placed end to end, would extend for a mile and a quarter. In pitching these tents, the men had driven 6,786 long tent pins and 7,246 short tent pins, a total of 14,032. (See frontispiece, an aerial view of 77th at Ste. Mere-Eglise.)

The hospital opened formally on July 18, and began to receive patients immediately. Because of the proximity of the hospital to the front the major portion of the patients were recently wounded and came directly from the clearing and collecting stations. All hospitals were not set up

and hospitals that were functioning were overloaded, and the 77th was an important factor in equalizing the work. By July 18, the Germans had shifted their main strength from the coastal area to the hilly ground in front of the Seventh Corps. In the Nineteenth Corps, the 30th Infantry Division driving southwestward across the Vire River had exploited a bridgehead to the south and west, and soon controlled a quarter circle area with a 6000 yard radius. The entire Nineteenth Corps, including the newly-arrived 35th Infantry Division, closed in on St. Lo, and a special task force of the 29th Infantry Division finally forced an entrance into the battered town.

The personnel of the hospital were organized into two nearly equal groups, one for each twelve hour shift, working from eight o'clock to eight o'clock, as all departments functioned completely during the entire twenty-four hours. In spite of the rapid rate of admissions, the organization of the services resulting from previous experience was such as to prevent the development of a bottle-neck at any point. In the receiving tent, Capt. Oren D. Boyce and Capt. Walter Olszewski examined each patient and determined accurately the ward to which the patient was to be taken. The excellent records made here were essential to the administration of the hospital, especially the registrar and the evacuation department. The patients were seen by their ward surgeon almost immediately after admission, and frequently were on the operating table less than six hours after injury. Yet the treatment of shock, x-rays, and other essential preoperative measures were not neglected.

Four operating tables and two tables for the treatment of fractures were in constant use in major surgery, and three tables were used eighteen to twenty-four hours a day in minor surgery. One officer acted as triage and liaison officer, assigning patients to the two operating surgeons of the team. To maintain the doctor-patient relationship and to provide all possible opportunity for follow-up, each team made rounds on their assigned wards at the beginning and end of each shift. Col. James B. Weaver, Maj. Mervin Rumold, and Maj. Maurice Snider were available at any hour for consultation. The severity of the wounds varied greatly, although the majority were seriously wounded. Most of the injuries were caused by mortar and 88 mm. gun fire, with the latter predominating. To the men, the 88 millimeter gun of the enemy was the most feared weapon. The deadly accuracy of this gun and the willingness of the Germans to shoot at any target with it, even if the target was only one man, was told repeatedly. These men, as they lay on the operating table waiting their treatment, told again and again their harrowing incidents and narrow escapes. Their stories were a far cry from the parade ground reviews, the snappy uniforms and the martial bands which one usually pictures in connection with the word "army." The most pathetic soldiers were those who had been injured on patrol or after an enemy counter-attack and had been unable to make their way back to the lines. The pain, thirst and anxiety which they had gone through was indescribable. The spirit and attitude of these wounded soldiers drew repeatedly the admiration of those who were caring for them. The men were glad to be out of the lines and still alive however badly wounded, and the relative security and comfort of a hospital contrasted sharply with the fear, dirt, noise and anxiety of the fighting zone. There was no groaning, whining, moaning or griping from these men; only a sincere gratitude for anything

which was being done for them. In the operating room not one man showed anything but the deepest confidence in what was done for him, and never questioned a treatment or procedure. If anything was said about the wound or operation by the patient, it was always done jokingly, as the patient who shyly suggested to Captain Ashley, "I have a wife and three kids, Doc, and may need that leg." That shattered leg received the best attention the surgeon could give for he, too, had a wife and three children at home.

Although the medical service was very busy in its own right, officers from this service were loaned to surgery as anesthetists and to supervise the shock department. The major portion of the anesthesia was given by nurse-anes-



NEUROSURGICAL TEAM FROM THE FIRST AUXILIARY SURGICAL GROUP

thetists. Their calm reassurance and quiet conversation with each patient was an important factor in the smooth conduct of the operating room. The excellent manner in which the entire anesthesia section carried out its work was a tribute to the instruction and management by Captain Harwin J. Brown and Captain Nihil K. Venis.

A separate tent for neurosurgery was set up, connecting with the operating room, and here the neurosurgical team repeatedly performed feats of surgical skill which resulted in the saving of many lives. The personnel, Maj. Jules A. Plaut, Maj. Charles H. Gillespie, Capt. Victor M. Dorris, Lt. Helen M. Clough, T/4 Robert Puckett, and T/5 Thomas McCrystal, were an attached auxiliary surgical team from the 1st Auxiliary Surgical Group. Capt. Alfred F. Knoll, Capt. Parker Mills, Capt. Edward H. Rockey, Lt. Louise C. Dieter, a maxillofacial team of the 1st Auxiliary Surgical Group, also performed an excellent job, dividing this difficult group of cases with the 77th's maxillofacial team.

The x-ray department functioned unceasingly. Because the exposure and development of film and the fluoroscopy of the patients for foreign body localization required a certain minimum amount of time, it was here that a bottle neck had seemed most likely to develop, but the highly efficient organization of this department and the hard work of the officers and men enabled them to keep pace with the wards and operating room without sacrifice of accuracy or quality. Capt. Max S. Allen, Capt. Gordon Voorhees, T/4 Clifford Everson, and T/4 James Cover

made up the personnel of the shock section. The organization of the hospital based on the premise that the same doctor for each group of patients resulted in better medical care, worked to a disadvantage for this group because there was no shock ward as such in operation and it was necessary to prepare each intravenous medication, then carry it to the various wards and administer it to the patient. Even so they were able to respond promptly with the indicated treatment and during this twenty-day period administered an amazing amount of intravenous medication: fifty-six gallons of plasma (900 units of 250 cc. each), thirty gal-



WHITE WASHED STONES LINED THE ROAD

lons of whole blood (240 units of 500 cc. each), and seventy-two gallons of glucose and saline solution (288 units of 1000 cc. each). This blood, collected from the soldiers of the American supply and administrative troops in England, was flown to France and delivered to the hospital daily by the refrigeration trucks of the central blood bank. The generosity of these so-called "chairborne" troops resulted in the saving of countless lives of both Allied and enemy troops.

The medical service admitted the usual group of illnesses, and in addition many cases of combat exhaustion and malaria. Among the latter, a number of old friends from the 1st and 9th Divisions who had been hospitalized in Africa and Sicily returned with a recurrence of their malaria. Under the direction of Capt. John Tucker, the evacuation department functioned very competently, evacuating large numbers of patients without confusion or error. Using the system which had been developed by

Capt. Tucker and T/3 Robert Gerlach, the ambulances were loaded at each ward, and the convoy dispatched in a minimum of time. The seriously ill patients were taken to a nearby airstrip for transportation to England by plane, the less serious sent to Omaha and Utah Beaches where they were sent across the channel by ship, the convalescent patients were sent to a general hospital farther back in Normandy and a few patients were returned to their units for duty.

The supply department kept trucks on the road most of the time finding supply depots and obtaining replacements for the materials which were used in large quantities: plasma, medications, linens, catgut, underwear, pencils, socks, paper, gasoline and the hundreds of other articles required for operation of the hospital. Trucks made daily trips to the ration dumps, and the mess officer made additional trips to all the available ration dumps, securing such scarce items as butter and oranges for the patients and hospital personnel. One mess was kept open twenty-four hours a day, and here the night shift ate their midnight lunch, and any ambulance driver or other transient could eat at any hour. During this busy period for the professional section of the hospital, the outside detail under the direction of Sgt. Kendall improved the appearance



BANDAGE STRUNG AROUND THE TENT STAKES
TO AID NIGHT PERSONNEL

of the hospital site. Whitewashed stones were placed along the road, which not only added to the uniformity and neatness of the camp but also served as markers during the blackout hours, and bandages were placed from stake to stake around each tent, which also was of much help to the litter bearers and other persons who had to walk about the area at night. The utilities section constructed a large canvas water storage tank, capable of holding 5,000 gallons and elevated about twelve feet off the ground so that a constant supply of water under pressure was available to the operating rooms and kitchens.

During this period the absolute necessity of obtaining additional litter bearers was recognized and a group of men were attached from the 25th General Hospital which was awaiting the arrival of its equipment. These men performed superbly in carrying out this heavy work.

Air activity of the enemy had been considerably curtailed and the planes which were seen in such large numbers during the day were all of the Allied forces. The now familiar black and white stripes on the wings and

fuselage gave a sense of comfort as squadrons passed overhead on the way to or from another attack on the enemy lines. At night, however, the Germans continued to bomb the nearby beaches and the tracers of the anti-aircraft artillery as they arched into the sky were like a beautiful display of fireworks. Frequently at night the irregular drone of the engines of an enemy reconnaissance plane could be heard. The distant rumbling of heavy artillery was present every morning, and irregularly at other times during the day and night. The 90 mm. anti-aircraft guns located close to camp fired several rounds every evening, and at any time small arms fire could be heard as the men practiced with their own and captured rifles.

Duke Shoop, correspondent for the *Kansas City Star*, and for a time attached to the 77th, returned late one afternoon for treatment of his injuries and explained how close to death he had been. A group of about thirty correspondents and naval officers had learned of a newly-liberated village further east on the Cotentin peninsula. Organizing a small convoy of several vehicles they had started for this village. Receiving directions which proved to be wrong, the convoy was moving slowly down one of the hedgerow-lined roads when they approached two German soldiers. Thinking that they wished to surrender, the naval captain ordered the convoy to stop and, as it did so, German mortar and machine gun fire opened up on the group. The men immediately dove for cover, but the naval captain and several others, including the man next to Shoop in the ditch, were killed. Within a few minutes a platoon of American tanks came up, and by hanging to the sides of these the remainder of the party was removed to safety. Generally speaking, there were few incidents in which the hospital personnel was in close contact with the enemy. The bombing at night was far enough away so that it caused little concern, more worry being expressed about the possibility of the flak landing in the area.

Visitors during this time included consultants for the various medical specialties and correspondents. One of the latter, Virginia Irwin, filed a story to her paper, the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*. The clipping was sent to members of the 77th when it was published. The final news release was as follows:

"I have spent this day watching wounded pour from the big push in Marigny into one of the most amazing hospitals in France. The commanding officer of this hospital behind the lines is an old Army man, tough as a tent and just about as subtle as a slug between the eyes. His name is Colonel Dean M. Walker, once of Hollywood but for the past eighteen years rough and ready Army medico with service in Hawaii, Panama, and Trinidad. Nine days ago this 750-bed hospital under tents was set down on a field here in France within six hours. It was set up and receiving patients within a very few more hours. It was ready to function at capacity and, since the battle for St. Lo, doctors, nurses, and all hospital personnel have been working in twelve-hour shifts in a ceaseless battle here behind the lines to save the lives of men wounded in some of the bitterest fighting in history.

"The men at the front don't observe union hours, so why should we," the Colonel frowned, "there's a war going on; had you heard of it?" Tyrannical and fully conscious of the fact that his staff pay him deep if grudging respect, the Colonel drives himself as he

does all his hospital personnel. A diesel engine of energy, he is obsessed with but one idea—that these boys back from the front receive the best medical attention in the fastest possible time. ‘A few days ago we performed 200 operations in twenty-four hours,’ the Colonel said in a whisper as we stood at the end of a long surgery tent and looked down a row of operating tables where white swathed doctors and nurses bent over American boys.

‘Some of them had arms and legs missing, some were only a hopeless jumble of blown-to-bits humanity. I saw sights that I shall remember when younger generations are reading of this bloody war in books of history. From clearing stations at the front, the wounded are brought to this evacuation hospital where emergency operations are performed and casualties evacuated by air or hospital ship just as soon as they are in condition to be moved. As an almost continuous stream of ambulances, with their great red crosses painted on sides and top, unload litters of wounded at the receiving tent another almost continuous stream of ambulances leaves with litter loads of wounded who have received emergency treatment and are being evacuated by air or water back to England. ‘The turnover is terrific,’ the Colonel explained. ‘Some of these men will have received emergency surgery and be back in England in a hospital within twelve hours of being wounded at the front. But not stomach and chest wounds. Stomach wounds we keep ten days, chest wounds five days.’

‘Everything in this amazing hospital is geared for speed. At mess doctors and nurses snatch hurried meals, still dressed in their white headgear with masks hanging from their necks. There are officers’ and enlisted men’s recreation tents but they are empty. No one in this hospital has time for anything but work and sleep. In a shock laboratory, I saw the hospital’s great store of whole blood and plasma that arrives daily by plane from England. In a medical supply tent there were great stores of medicine to meet any emergency, arranged more neatly, the Colonel pointed out, than in any fixed institution in the States. The Colonel takes fierce and justified pride in his hospital. Nothing is missed by the Colonel in his daily rounds. He peers into garbage buckets, pokes into litter heaps, peers into showers which he had rigged up by attaching a connection to a huge sterilizer used for renovating mattresses and bedding. ‘I don’t give a damn about wasting a little food,’ he growled, ‘but if a garbage can is full it means my people aren’t getting food cooked to suit them. The way they work, they damn well better be fed well.’

‘After a complete tour of the hospital, from mess tents to nurses’ quarters, the Colonel and I climbed a slight rise back of the hospital that commanded a sweeping view of this enormous hospital under canvas. The farthest tent from view, set in a little corner and isolated from the rest, the Colonel pointed out as the morgue. ‘Purple Heart corner, we call it,’ he said in a soft tone far different from the one he had been using. On our way back to the Colonel’s office, I asked him about a strange looking table I had seen leaning against the wall in the enlisted men’s recreation tent. ‘It’s a crap table and a damn good one, too,’ he explained. ‘I’m not supposed to know it’s there.’

‘As I took my leave of the hospital, the Colonel and I stood for a while watching litter bearers gently load their burdens into ambulances waiting to take the wounded to hospital planes which had just landed on a nearby airstrip. Alongside one boy on a litter the chaplain stood talking. ‘We’ve got two chaplains, Catholic and Protestant,’ the Colonel said. ‘They’re a great influence. They haven’t influenced me but they influence those boys and that helps me,’ he said, tough to the last. The Colonel put me in a command car and sent me on my way. Down the road ahead of me a convoy of ambulances was moving to the airstrip to put their patched-up casualties on waiting hospital planes. Down the road back of me came a convoy of ambulances bringing their loads of wounded back from the battle front to this amazing hospital where human beings are patched up like automobiles are put together on a production line.

‘I remember the Colonel’s words: ‘The men at the front don’t observe union hours, so why should we.’ As long as that convoy of ambulances keeps coming up that narrow French road from the front, the production line in the operating room of that hospital will keep going. ‘There’s a war going on. Had you heard of it?’

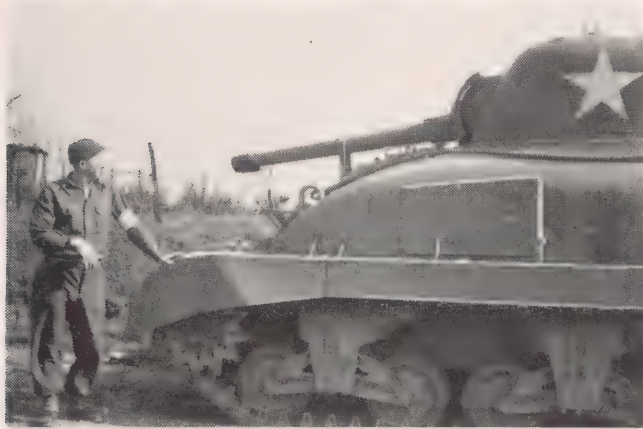
Despite the pressure of twelve to sixteen hours’ work each day there were moments when there was time to think of mail, for the unit had received none in nearly a month. The stories of how the Army Postal Service had delivered letters on D-Day to the men on the beaches were recalled, and the men were beginning to consider these purely publicity stunts. Finally there arrived a tantalizing sprinkle of letters, and a few days later a deluge of mail. What little time could be snatched from each busy day was spent in answering these letters.

Although opportunity for relaxation and recreation was found only now and then, every effort was made to provide proper facilities, not only for the patients but also for the hospital personnel. With the aid of improvised supports, four ward tents were combined to make one large tent and this was the theater. Daily motion pictures were shown, most of which were fairly new—*Song of Bernadette*, *Meet the People* and *Andy Hardy’s Blonde Trouble*. An orchestra from an artillery unit played one evening, and two U.S.O. show units visited the hospital. Recreation tents, one for the enlisted men and one for the officers and nurses, were erected and books and magazines made available. A small bar was installed in each tent, but there was very little to drink but wine. A small quantity of a drink native to the region was secured. A small quantity was sufficient, for calvados was said to be made by the triple distillation of hard cider, and the resulting liquid contained the highest concentration of alcohol that any of the men had ever found.

Just behind the hospital was a tank park in which were placed tanks of both American and German forces which had been damaged beyond repair by shell and mine explosions. These tanks, with tracks blown off, shell holes in the armour plate and blackened by fire gave some idea of the danger and fire power the tanker must face when he goes into battle. The tank retrievers which brought in these tanks were among the most impressive of the many types of vehicles which the army had. A huge tractor pulling a low trailer with ramps could carry a tank of any

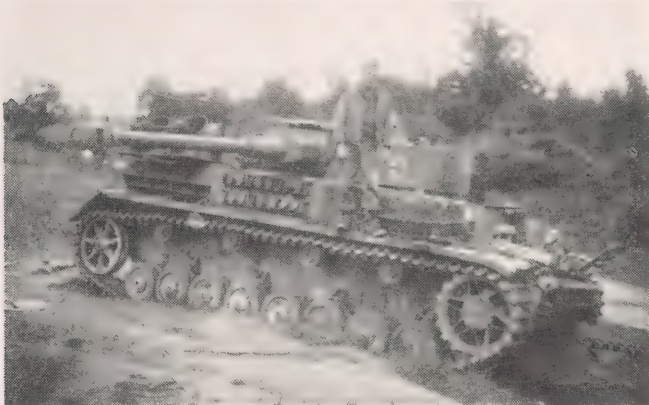
size. A winch on the back of the tractor pulled the wrecked tank up on the ramps of the trailer. A convoy of these monstrous thirty-four wheel retrievers going along the road impressed the Americans of the industrial ingenuity and might of the United States.

During the latter part of the stay here long tank columns of the First Free French Forces passed by the camp. These men had been recruited in Africa and England, outfitted and equipped principally by the United States, and were now returning to take part in the liberation of their homeland. They shouted, laughed and waved as they rode by



AN AMERICAN SHERMAN TANK

the camp, happy to be back on their own soil again. An occasional tanker who was a native of Normandy could not withstand the temptation of parking his tank in his own front yard and for a few minutes visiting with his family for the first time in three or four years. It was along this same road that long convoys carrying the first prisoners of war seen in France passed on their way to the cages



A GERMAN TANK

in the rear. Disregarding the discomfort caused by packing fifty men to a two-and-one-half ton truck, a considerable number of these prisoners appeared pleased—the war was over for them and they were on the way to safety and comfort.

In the early part of August the rate of admissions gradually decreased, and by the sixth of the month only 204 patients remained in the hospital. A total of 3,234 patients had been admitted during the twenty days of active oper-

ation, including 181 German prisoners of war and 27 French civilians. There were 1,775 operations performed, the largest number in any one day was 319 on July 20.

The 77th Evacuation Hospital had been temporarily attached to the First Army during this period and now orders were received from Col. Charles Beasley, ADSEC



LOADED CONVOY READY TO LEAVE STE. MERE-EGLISE

Surgeon, returning the 77th to ADSEC and instructing the unit to move to the vicinity of St. Lo. The litter bearers from the 25th General Hospital were recalled to their own unit, and packing for the move began. The battle for St. Lo was over and the troops had gradually pushed toward the base of the Cotentin peninsula. Every day tons of supplies and equipment poured into Normandy through Utah and Omaha Beaches; the harbor at Cherbourg remained blocked by wreckage and mines. Although the Germans



THE 77TH CONVOY EN ROUTE TO ST. LO

still held a strip along the southern coast of Normandy and continued their thrusts with armor at the British and Canadian area about Caen, there was no doubt that the Allies had established themselves securely, and the penetration into France was only a matter of time.

On August 8, the advance detail departed for St. Lo. The hospital was taken down and packed, and when the trucks arrived the following day, loading was accomplished in a minimum of time. As no specific time had been announced for the departure, for less than the required number of trucks were due in the first group, the personnel had not

packed their own gear. About two o'clock in the afternoon a formation was held and the information was received that a larger number of trucks than expected had been made available, and would arrive in one-half hour. With haste, packing was completed by the time the trucks pulled into the area, loading was accomplished, and the long convoy moved out onto the road at three-thirty. This was a short trip but the first important one in France. The hospital equipment was stacked high on the trucks and the men found seats on top of the boxes and tents. The officers and nurses rode with their personal luggage in several two and one-half ton trucks.

As most of the people of the hospital had not had time for anything other than work, this trip gave many their first chance to see something of France. Hundreds of French families, displaced by the invasion, were returning to their homes in any available means of transportation: bicycles, wheelbarrows, carts, old trucks, horses, even oxen. These were loaded so heavily that it seemed impossible that any progress could be made. Some of the bicycles had packages and traveling cases tied on to a height well above the head of the person who pushed the heavy load along.

Some of the articles which they carried appeared absolutely useless for the field life they had been leading; vases, pictures, furniture, and similar equipment represented cherished possessions, but blankets and cooking apparatus would have been of more purpose. But even in these straitened and uncomfortable circumstances, each Frenchman took the trouble to smile and wave a victory

sign with two fingers as the convoy passed, even if this meant dropping a precious package or chancing an overturned bicycle.

Nearly every village between Ste. Mere-Eglise and St. Lo had been a focal point of the fighting at some time during the campaign, and the ruins of the houses and buildings showed how intense the bombing and artillery fire had been. There was no destruction, however, which could compare with that in St. Lo. The town had been built on the side of a hill as it sloped into the valley. From the road one side of the town could be seen, and the whole town was one huge mass of rubble. It appeared as though a powerful explosive placed in every building all had been detonated at once. There was not a single house or building which was untouched; although from a distance one might appear intact; on approaching more closely only a shell of walls remained. Not a single window in the entire town remained whole, not a street that was not heaped with stone, bricks and dirt. From the top of the hill the cathedral was silhouetted against the setting sun, and the light shining through the shell holes accentuated the destruction. By pushing the rubble to one side with a bulldozer, the engineers had produced a passable road through the main street of town, and as the convoy passed between the skeletons of buildings, a glimpse of a picture still on the wall or a book on the table where it had been dropped, gave a sense of unreality as the men realized that a few short days before people had lived here. Half the front and balcony of a theater had been blown away, and the remain-



ing portion of the balcony leaned toward the center, but the rugs remained on the floor and the seats appeared ready to receive any movie fan who might wish to see a show from this angle. The road curved around the base of the hill and then along the slope on the other side to the outskirts, where an M.P. standing at a road junction, directed the traffic in and out of this site of death and destruction. It was while passing through this town that the men altered the interpretation of the phrase "a liberated town" to the jocular meaning that the more destroyed a town the greater the degree of liberation.

The new site for the hospital was about one and one-half miles south of St. Lo and across the road from a race track where the First Army medical base depot was located. The camp was situated in the paddocks for the track, on a gently sloping field divided by a number of concrete fences. The hospital section was placed on the higher part of the area, while down the slope in an apple orchard the tents for the officers were pitched, with those for the nurses in another field further back. The enlisted men's tents were placed back of the rear part of the hospital. The grass, almost knee-high, was soon trampled down, especially along the paths and roads. When the advance detail had arrived, the field had not been demined and the engineers were called in to perform this task. The men of the advance detail found a number of enemy dead lying about, one particularly grotesque as the bloated body floated amid the weeds and scum of a small pond. All about the area, and especially in the orchards, were well constructed foxholes, wide and deep with logs and dirt over the tops.

Engineers constructed the roads and helped with the erection of the water tower. There was one problem which they solved with the greatest ease. The concrete fences were in many places blocking needed roads, and to remove these obstacles would have been a difficult and time consuming task. But the engineers simply pushed the fences down and out of the way with a bulldozer. In a similar manner, several dead cows which were beginning to smell were buried by heaping a mound of dirt over them with the bulldozer.

The hospital mission for this set-up was that of triage. Briefly, triage means sorting. In this case it meant the rapid examination and classification of the wounded as they were admitted, with assignment to a specified category and evacuation to the proper place. By this time a number of army evacuation hospitals were in operation ahead of the 77th and were rendering primary care to the casualties, but the evacuation of hundreds of patients to rear echelon hospitals in France and England created a tremendous problem. The severity of the injury and the need for special treatment determined when, how, and where the patient was to be sent. Unless carefully done, improper evacuation might result in the death of a patient, in delay of pressing treatment or in prolonged absence of men from their units. Thus, the 77th was designated to funnel all these casualties, to determine each patient's destination and to segregate those who were unfit to travel. The patients were divided into four categories: those who were not transportable by reason of needing immediate attention or further rest and treatment, those who were seriously wounded but could be moved without danger or discomfort, those less seriously wounded who could be moved without danger of discomfort, those less seriously wounded who could be transported at will, and those whose injury

or illness was minor in nature and would be ready for duty in a few days. For each category there was more than one means of transportation. Those who were not transportable were kept in the hospital and given the indicated treatment. The transportable seriously wounded were sent back to England either by air or ship. The patients sent by plane were those who needed early treatment of a highly specialized nature only available in the semi-permanent general hospitals. This category included particularly brain, chest, and abdominal wounds. The less seriously ill and injured were sent to the beach and then by ship to England, or to rear echelon general hospitals in Normandy where they would continue their convalescence. Those who were only slightly ill or slightly wounded and would be able to return to duty within a short time were held in the 77th or sent to other nearby medical installations in Normandy. Patients with venereal disease or self-inflicted wounds were sent to predesignated special hospitals.

As it was known that the patients would be received in large numbers, the majority for triage only, several alterations were made in the usual arrangements. A plan was worked out whereby each patient would receive more than cursory attention, and whereby it would be difficult for any mistake to occur either in treatment or evacuation. 450 beds were set aside for occupation by patients admitted to the hospital, and these wards were to function in the usual manner. The remainder of the hospital plus additional tents, were to be used for the triage patients. Certain tents were for those who were to go to England by air, other wards for those bound for England by ship, a third group for the patients who were to go to general hospitals in Normandy, and the remainder for the slightly wounded.

The receiving tent was considerably enlarged by the erection of four combined ward tents, providing space for forty litter patients and benches for sixty walking patients. Cot frames were used in the manner of trestles to hold the litters and thus avoid the back-breaking stooping that would have had to be done to examine so many patients. Four surgical officers, one medical officer, and the regular receiving officer worked in eight-hour shifts. When the patient was brought in he was immediately examined rapidly but completely, and a notation made on the front of his chart indicating his final evacuation and the ward to which he was to go. In case of patients to be admitted to the hospital for further treatment, the routine procedure was carried out, but on the others the paper work was cut to a minimum so that more time might be spent in actual examination of the patient. The patients were then carried to the assigned wards, and here the dressings were changed or reinforced as indicated, the patient was given a meal of at least sandwiches and hot coffee, regardless of the hour of night or day, and he was cleaned up. Some of the patients remained only an hour or so, others as long as twenty-four hours, with the average stay being seven hours. But regardless of how long he remained in the hospital, when the patient left he was clean, fed and comfortable.

Beginning early in the morning and at intervals during the day, evacuation was carried out. A convoy of ambulances designated for the air-strip, beach or general hospitals drove into the hospital area, and loaded from each ward the patients who had been there the longest. Within one-half hour, the convoy was completely loaded and on the road. Each ambulance driver was told where he was

to go, and which ward to load from, so there could be no error in having a patient reach the wrong destination. The system worked very smoothly despite the large number of patients who passed through the hospital.

During the first twelve hours that the hospital was open, there were received 1,450 patients, or two patients every minute during these twelve hours. In the six days the hospital was in operation a total of 6,304 patients were handled in triage alone, and at the same time 599 patients



CONVOY OF AMBULANCES

were admitted to the hospital for treatment. The total patients received, 6,903, equaled a receiving rate of forty-eight patients per hour for six days. Those patients who were admitted to the hospital were the most seriously ill of the entire group, and in themselves required a considerable amount of care and treatment. The greatest activity in the receiving tent began about nine or ten in the morning and continued without pause until ten or eleven in the evening. Throughout the remainder of the night and morning, ambulances arrived intermittently. Despite the fact that there was space for one hundred patients in the tent at one time, there were on several occasions a line of ambulances three abreast stretching over two hundred yards from the entrance. The six doctors working as rapidly as possible were just able to keep up with the litter bearers who carried the patient in from the ambulance and out the back of the receiving tent after the patient had been seen. A nurse was assigned to the receiving tent to help with

dressings and administer medication. The litter bearers, convalescent combat exhaustion cases from the 90th Quartermaster Battalion, bore the brunt of the physical work. After an eight-hour shift of this heavy work, these men had blisters on their hands and tired, aching muscles, but they were always back ready for more work when the time came, and took great pride in how carefully they could carry in a wounded patient and set the litter gently on the cot. The Red Cross personnel brought in cigarettes and gum to be given to the patients, wrote V-mail for them and helped in numerous ways.

The picture of this busy tent during the height of activity in the middle of a hot afternoon showed litters being carried in both entrances from the ambulances. Litters, each containing a wounded soldier, rested on each cot, and in every open space about the ground. On nearly every patient was a bandaged head, leg or arm. The large spica casts made the patient appear huge beneath the blankets, with the plaster-encased foot protruding from the bottom. On other litters, a depression in the blankets indicated an amputated leg. Drainage tubes protruded over the side of the litter into a bottle on the ground. Along the sides of the tent sat the walking wounded, carrying their precious souvenirs and smaller articles of equipment. A V-shaped slit in the sleeve of every shirt indicated where the battalion aid station medic had administered tetanus toxoid and morphine. The medical officers went from patient to patient, asking questions, scanning each record, then lifting the dressing to check each wound. The litters went out the rear of the tent to the wards as rapidly as they came in the entrance, and this continuous flow of wounded kept up hour after hour.

In the long double ward tents the patients left on the litters were placed in two long rows down each side of the tent with only a few inches separating each litter. The nurses and wardmen worked hard and faithfully, changing dressings, administering medications, providing hot water, soap and towels. The covers were rearranged, blankets placed under injured extremities and everything possible done to enhance the comfort of each patient. The nurses checked each record, confirming the name to make sure that no patient had the wrong record. Two medical officers, assigned to cover all the triage wards, were kept busy with special dressings and administering special treatment. The ward men worked hard for long hours as so many patients necessitated a thousand and one tasks and errands.

It was during this mission that all officers appreciated two facts which superficially seemed obvious, but which needed emphasis and further consideration. The immeasurable value of concise, clearly written medical records was repeatedly appreciated as the officers scanned each record quickly to learn the diagnosis and summary of treatment. Some of the neatly typewritten records were so verbose and confusing, even though written according to the medical manual, that they were much less helpful than other brief penciled notes. Secondly, it was soon realized that one could not always determine what the condition of the patient would be at the end of a long ambulance ride; a patient who starts out in excellent condition might arrive at the next hospital in a very precarious state. In addition, numerous other lessons were learned from patients with casts which were too tight or had broken, or dressings poorly applied. By far the greater number of patients,

however, had received superior medical care, and only a brief check was necessary to ascertain if they were transportable.

On the other hospital wards the work went on much as usual. As a limited number of fresh casualties were seen, the work was mostly changing casts and building-up seriously ill patients for transportation. The usual respiratory infections, diarrhea and like illnesses, and again several patients with an exacerbation of their malaria, were admitted.

In the kitchens the preparation was a continuous process, tray after tray of sandwiches prepared and gallon after gallon of coffee brewed. In addition, the cooking of the usual three meals and midnight lunch had to be done daily. Rations were sometimes not easy to find, but somehow there was always adequate amounts of food.

In the apple orchard where the officers and nurses' tents had been pitched, the cool shade in the late afternoon gave those who were off duty a chance to relax, read and write letters. Captain Bowser spent several pleasant afternoons reading *The Life of the Caesars*, and his familiar laughter resounded throughout the area as he read some amusing detail, such as the punishment meted out to the disobedient, or insisted that he should read the gory lines to anyone nearby, asleep or awake. Most of the officers were content to spread a blanket in the shade and doze until supper. The swamps in this area provided ideal breeding places for mosquitoes, and these pests were in constant attendance. Late in the evening swarms of them descended upon the hospital. Mosquito bars had been issued, and with one of these over the cot, the occupant was fairly safe. The bees were also a constant source of discomfort, and very few escaped the vicious stings. In the mess tents the sugar and preserves attracted the bees like no flower ever did, and they buzzed about the tables, lighted on the sugar bowls and made frequent landings on the food.

The public address system of the hospital was used here with notable effect, and a number of comments were heard on the southern accent of the announcer, T/4 James Howard, whose North Carolina drawl contrasted sharply with the more brisk speech of the other telephone operators. This public address system did save many steps, as a doctor, nurse or enlisted man could be called quickly to any ward or section of the hospital when needed.

During the brief period that the hospital was in operation here, there were numerous visitors, including correspondents, friends, and the consultants from higher headquarters of several of the specialties. Bill White, correspondent for *Time* and *Life* and good friend of many of the personnel of the unit, stayed several days. Lt. Philip Kuhn, brother of Maj. William Kuhn, liaison and observation pilot for one of the front-line artillery units, also visited the hospital and brought fresh and interesting news from the fighting lines. A letter was received from Maj. Francis A. Carmichael, stationed in a general hospital in England, telling how a large number of patients who had been treated by the 77th at Ste. Mere-Eglise had been admitted to his hospital. He stated that these patients were uniformly arriving in excellent condition, and commented particularly on how well the casts had held up during the transportation of the patients.

The ward officer and nurse on M-1, a medical ward, finally abandoned their attempts to find interpreters to help them talk with all their patients after it was learned

one afternoon that there were Americans, English, French, Poles, Russians, Arabs, Italians and one Hindu on the ward. Men could be found in the unit who spoke French, Polish, Russian, Arabic and Italian, but on the Hindu they were forced to give up.

Four officers and twenty-five nurses were sent to the 77th from the 50th General Hospital, but as they arrived after the period of greatest activity, there was little for them to do, and they were soon returned to their own unit.

On August 16, the 7th Field Hospital came in and took over the work which the 77th had been doing, as by now the admission rate had rapidly decreased. This same day



PERSONNEL RIDING ATOP THE OVERLOADED TRUCKS

orders were received from Colonel Beasley's office for a move to Le Mans, and that afternoon the advance detail left for the new site.

Following the capture of St. Lo, which unhinged the entire western flank of the German line, the last phase of the Allied offensive in Normandy started. The British and Canadian divisions continued to withstand the enemy counterattacks and were able to mount one important offensive astride the Caen-Falaise road. After intense air and artillery preparation, the 1st, 4th, 9th and 30th Infantry Divisions pressed south toward Coutances, and two days later the 4th Armored Division striking from the west captured this important town. The 4th Armored Division then broke through near St. Denis-le-Gast and raced south

to Avranches, while the 6th Armored Division swept down the coast to Granville and the 1st Infantry Division took Brecy. As the Germans reeled back, armor of the American Third Army poured through the funnel at Avranches, over-ran the Brittany peninsula, captured Rennes, then Le Mans, circled north toward the Seine and east on to Paris. The German Seventh Army, instead of withdrawing, tried to cut the corridor at Avranches and succeeded in making a penetration of three miles, but was met by the 3rd Armored Division supported by dive bombers and was pushed back by the recapture of Mortain and Domfront on the 15th of August. The Germans were pocketed between the American First and Third Armies on the southeast and the British Second and Canadian First Armies on the northwest when the Allied troops met at Trun on August 18.

The sun was bright and warm as the convoy pulled out of the old site at St. Lo on August 16. The personnel rode on top of the equipment which was packed into every truck. In the first part of the trip, through low rolling country, the effects of the bombing attacks and artillery barrages were seen in the countless shell holes in the fields, filled in craters in the roads, long gaps in the hedgerows and the splintered trunks of trees. The enemy had cut the telephone and electric wires between every pole. All bridges had been blown up and at every crossing a temporary bridge had been constructed. Each one of these had a sign informing all who crossed that "You are crossing the . . . River through the Courtesy of the . . . Combat Engineer Construction Battalion," or "Built by the . . . Combat Engineer Construction Battalion in 8 hours, 10 minutes and 43 seconds." Most of the bridges had not been placed at exactly the same site as the former ones, so that usually a short but very rough detour was necessary. The road ran up and down over hills just high enough to slow the convoy. Again in the villages the destruction was evident, but never on the scale seen at St. Lo. The natives stood along the streets, smiling and waving as heartily as though the hospital personnel had done the actual fighting and brought them liberation. At the corners and intersections, the children gathered and when the trucks slowed, there were cries of "bon-bon, cigarette pour papa," as they waved with one hand and held out the other. For the bits of hard chocolate, chewing gum and occasional cigarettes which were tossed out to them, the children threw apples, peaches and pears back into the trucks. The men gradually developed different responses to the greetings, and by watching only the men in the truck ahead, one could determine the people who were along the road. For the adults of middle and old age, a kind smile and wave of the hand was given; the children received a laugh for their antics and a wave of the hand and forearm; but for a petite mamemoiselle there were broad smiles, whistles and waving of both arms.

As the convoy traveled farther south, there was less damage in the villages, for through this area the armored divisions and motorized infantry had passed rapidly. The French Tricolor flew from every building and home which still stood, and an occasional member of the French Forces of the Interior was seen with his armband and tommy-gun. After sunset, the wind became colder and colder, and as mile after mile passed by and the men became tired and sleepy, attempts were made to find a place and position in which to rest. Repeated changes in the arrangement of the equipment always left at least one sharp point protruding; or one man in the truck without a place to sleep, or the

makeshift bed at a slope too sharp, until most of the people gave up the search for comfort and took short naps in whatever position they happened to be. The rattle of the truck as it bounced along the rough road, grinding the gears on every hill, and the sudden clatter when another vehicle roared past, and the cold wind which penetrated deeper and deeper were all factors opposing any attempt to rest.

The night was black, and only the "cats-eyes" were permitted. These tiny slits of light provided no illumination on the road for driving, and the drivers kept the trucks out of the ditches only by following closely behind the one ahead. Some of the men thought the convoy leader must be feeling his way, for he certainly could see very little. Two gasoline-tank truck convoys were passed and there occurred several near misses. In the towns, military police



POPLAR-LINED HIGHWAY—NORMANDY

were stationed at the intersections, and waved the trucks around each corner with a white phosphorescent armlet. During the hours of darkness, there were no wrecks but just at dawn, one of the drivers fell asleep, and his truck ran off the road, striking two telephone poles before stopping. On this truck was the equipment of ward M-1 and the wardmen, T/4 Ed W. Lambert, T/5 Harold E. Sherrill and T/5 Kenneth J. Kohlwaies. Lambert and Sherrill were thrown into the hedgerow bordering the road, and Kohlwaies was tossed up into a tree where he clung to a branch. None of the men were seriously injured and they continued the trip in the next truck which came by.

The sun was up and shining brightly as the last two sections of the hospital arrived at the new site about fifteen miles north of Le Mans, between the villages of Ballon and Couer de Boeuf. The quiet, pleasant country district was completely untouched by war or active military operations. The meadow, which had been selected, sloped gent-

ly to a long line of stately Lombardy poplars along one side and the rear boundary. Beyond these trees lay a flat field with an apple orchard at the farther end. The hospital site had been staked out on the slope, and the tents for the enlisted men were pitched beyond the trees to the rear of camp.

The trucks were directed to the proper points for unloading, and the weary people climbed down to stretch their stiff, cramped muscles. The cooks of the advance detail had a breakfast of hot cakes and coffee ready. Fed and a little refreshed, the men immediately unloaded the trucks and began the erection of the essential hospital tents. Receiving, x-ray, operating room, mess and wards all went up rapidly when, in the midst of this work, the order was received not to set up the hospital but to bivouac in this area. The armored columns of the First and Third Armies were knifing on toward the Seine and Paris, and this section had become rear echelon only hours after being front line. The war had progressed faster than the non-mobile units could move, and until at least a temporary stabilization of the front could be determined, the 77th and similar units were given a rest. In this warfare of speed and maneuver, the casualties were light and could best be evacuated to the hospitals farther back rather than move a hospital several times a week. The army 400-bed evacuation hospitals were leap-frogging one another in rapid succession, and their capacity was adequate for the mission at hand.

When the 77th was ordered to bivouac, "resting" began at once. Immediately everyone looked for some place to go, and clamored and scrounged for rides to get there. Passes to Le Mans were issued for the first several days. On the ride into town, over roads lined with Lombardy poplars and bordered by innumerable fields, an idea of the immense amount of material and personnel required for such a military effort was gained. In field after field, various units were bivouacked. Tanks, trucks, prime movers, jeeps, tractors, ambulances, motorcycles, command cars, weapons carriers, every conceivable type of vehicle was represented. Thousands of American, British and French soldiers worked on their equipment or lounged in the shade. Stacks of rations and ammunition, and hundreds of jerrycans were lined along the hedgerows and under the trees.

In Le Mans, the beautiful cathedral was seen with its thousands of intricate, carved figures and designs on the walls, doors and steps. Farther on into town, the street sloped down between two high stone walls, and a bridge across the top completed the frame for the picture of the narrow street beyond, lined with ancient shops and stores. In the town square, the military police had taken over the central part of the square which was designated as the official parking lot for army vehicles. At least every other building around the square housed a cafe, with its tables and chairs placed on the sidewalk.

The officers and men in the advance party had spent several hours in Le Mans after their work was done, and their descriptions of the stores with perfume, silk handkerchiefs, scarves, pipes and other desirable articles had spread rapidly through the camp, and everyone was ready to take advantage of this first opportunity to buy something in France. Within a week after the liberation of Le Mans, the stores were emptied of nearly all souvenirs. Perfume became unobtainable and the silk handkerchiefs were soon gone. The hat shops were depleted of berets,

even though the prices rose as rapidly as the stock decreased. In one store, a beret costing eighty-five francs about two o'clock in the afternoon at four o'clock was selling for a hundred ten francs. The men were reminded of the profiteers near the military installations at home who raised their prices as the population of the camp increased. For the first time in weeks, camera film could be obtained at several small stores with the familiar yellow and black "Kodak" signs. Picture postcards, maps, pipes and similar souvenirs were purchased, and after the shopping tour through the hot afternoon, a glass of wine was drunk at one of the sidewalk cafes.

At the hospital site, short walks were permitted without passes. The farmers in the neighborhood learned how welcome their products were at the hospital, and brought in eggs, tomatoes, plums, peaches and apples in abundance. Brisk trading took place with a package of cigarettes or chewing gum, a bar of candy, or a cake or soap being given in exchange for the eggs and fruit. Many of the men preferred to walk along the roads, and barter for the fruit or vegetables which they saw on the trees or in the gardens. The old farmhouses were unusual when compared to the sprawling group of separate buildings on an American farm. The living quarters, barn, tool and animal sheds, and other necessary buildings, were often housed under one roof, usually a long, two-story structure of stone or concrete. The thrift of the French peasant was understood in the saving of material with the small number of walls, and the greater ease of heating a home in this type of unit. The chickens might be free to wander in and out of the kitchen, and the compost pile might be just outside the bedroom window, but such minor matters did not seem to bother these thrifty farmers. But even with such meager holdings, by living and working in the open so much their health shone in their ruddy cheeks and in the bright eyes of the children.

It was only a short walk to Ballon where a few small stores contained an occasional desirable article. One store sold *sabots*, the wooden shoes so much in evidence on the natives, and these were bought as souvenirs to be sent home to long-suffering wives, mothers and sweethearts, who probably wondered what possible use these shoes could have and where they should put them. In this small village, the cafe proprietors were overly generous with their wine, plying every GI who stopped with a large glass of this delicious drink. The village church stood on the small square, and a number of the men attended services here one Sunday morning. The pious country folk, as they returned from church, vividly expressed the calamity of war on this small community, as only the very old and the very young were left, the others having been captured early in the war, or later shipped to Germany as slave labor.

The French soon learned of the generosity of the Americans, and had no hesitancy in accepting this. At first only a few appeared at the hospital entrance about meal time, and were admitted and fed. The next meal brought an increased number until soon the chow line of the civilians rivaled that of the enlisted men. While the hospital was willing to have a few guests at meals, it soon became obvious that this could not continue, and to avoid favoritism, no civilians were allowed into the mess unless accompanied by one of the hospital personnel. At church on Sunday morning the civilians were welcomed to the services con-

ducted by Chaplain McEvoy and Chaplain Floyd. The services were held in a beautiful outdoor setting beneath the tall trees.

The weather remained perfect most of the week, with bright clear days and cool nights. Long hours were spent in reading, writing letters and sleeping. After nearly six weeks of continuous work in caring for hundreds of patients, the hospital personnel were tired and a few days' rest was such a real pleasure that just lying in the shade in the warm afternoon was adequate entertainment and relaxation. In the evening, numerous "egg-frys" were conducted by the amateur chefs. The movies were well attended, and by the perseverance of the special service officer, a different picture was presented every night. No benches or chairs could be found, but sitting on the ground was a mild inconvenience for some real American entertainment.

Col. Rex Dively paid the unit an overnight visit, and was gladly received by his many friends. Another diversion was the party in celebration of the promotion of Maj. Rumold to Lieutenant-Colonel.

On August 23, orders were received for the unit to move to Chartres, a large town about forty miles from Paris. Under the supervision of Maj. Morris S. Harless, Capt. Paul E. Bennett, and Lt. Marvin Bowers, the advance party



TRUCK CONVOY READY TO LEAVE LE MANS

left that same day. The unit moved the following day, August 24, traveling in three sections, all arriving at the new site that afternoon or evening.

The invasion of southern France by the American Seventh Army came on August 15 with the landing between Toulon and Cannes and the objective of joining with the Allied troops advancing from Normandy. Meeting light resistance, they had penetrated 140 miles inland in eight days. In the north the Third Army swept around Paris in a drive to turn the left flank of the German Fifteenth Army. From the Le Mans area, columns of American tanks had swept north and east towards the Seine on an arc of seventy miles, reaching the river on two sides of Paris, at Mantes to the northwest and near Fontainebleau on the southeast, on August 20. Crossing immediately, these armored spearheads continued the movement to envelop Paris. In the city itself, the underground leaders gave the order on August 19 that brought forth fifty thousand members of the French Forces of the Interior and the unarmed populace to begin the street fighting which in four days liberated much of the city. The French 2nd Armored Division, veterans of the Tunisian campaign, commanded by General Leclerc, came to the aid of the patriots by

entering Paris from the south and west on August 24, following which the German garrison of ten thousand surrendered. Paris was finally liberated on August 26.

The trip from Le Mans to Chartres was pleasant and rapid. A few delays were encountered and one long detour was made because of the divisions which were moving up rapidly to exploit the crossings of the Seine and the seizure of Paris. Just outside the city of Chartres a huge airfield was passed. The enemy hangars and barracks had been blasted into heaps of debris, and the neighboring fields were pock-marked with bomb craters. Stacks of enemy aerial bombs were still piled around the edge of the field, and in some of the ruins were the charred remains of the Nazi planes. Near the barracks a large garden had been planted by the enemy airmen, and the vegetables were still in the neat, orderly beds. In the field itself, the strip had been repaired and the American observation planes were landing and taking off on their way to and from the front. The Paris-Chartres road was broad, smooth and straight in contrast to the narrow, rough macadam roads usually seen in France. Along the sides of the roads, the fields were filled with grain and the farmers were beginning to harvest their fall crops. An occasional field was dotted with foxholes where the infantry had dug in while overcoming a road block or other obstacle, or perhaps to pass the night. All along the road, just at the end of the field and placed alternately on each side of the road about forty yards apart, were L-shaped pits three to four feet in depth. Each one was marked by a wisp of straw tied to the top of a pole. These had been dug with military preciseness by the retreating enemy for protection of the drivers against the repeated strafing attacks which the American and British tactical air forces kept up daily with such devastating effect.

The country became more flat and the hedgerows seen so commonly in Normandy, had disappeared. Orchards were fewer, and the apple trees lined the roads in many places, and now and then the men were able to pick off some of this fruit as the trucks passed. The farms appeared devoted to the production of vegetables and grain. Water towers and flak towers dotted the horizon and large high tension electric lines carrying power to Paris ran across the country.

The new hospital site, located about twelve miles northeast of Chartres, lay about one hundred yards from the main highway on a secondary road. The wheat in this field had been cut only a few days previously. By the time the third section had pulled into the area, the trucks were up to their hubs in the ruts of the muddy field. The wet, stubble-dotted site made poor footing, and the mud clung to shoes in huge clumps. By evening, the pyramidal tents for quarters and many of the hospital tents had been erected, and by early afternoon of the following day, the hospital was completely set up and ready to receive patients.

The secondary road running in front of the hospital was narrow and badly cut up. The area chosen for the hospital sloped down to a shallow ravine lined by trees and bushes. On the opposite side of the road was a large meadow in which a flock of sheep grazed. At night the shepherd set up a dismountable corral each time in a different place, and his dogs herded the sheep inside. About five hundred yards to the east of the hospital was a small village, without a store but with hospitable civilians who

were willing to exchange eggs and wine for cigarettes and candy. Engineers were called in to work on the hospital roads and made some improvement with their large road-scraper. After the ground once became dry, there was no further difficulty as the days remained clear and bright. Before this, however, walking from one tent to another was a major problem and required rubber arctics to get through the sticky mud. Clothing and equipment became damp and had to be sunned to prevent mildew. On the first bright day one of the pyramidal tents in the officers' group was altered by the occupants to hang from the center pole like a closed umbrella, so that the entire contents of the tent were exposed to the sun at one time without moving them out. Others followed suit, and blankets were hung from the guy ropes and sleeping bags thrown over hastily erected lines between the tents.

The patients began to arrive almost immediately after the hospital was opened. During the first few days the patients were freshly wounded and came from the Seine crossings southwest of Paris. While from the over-all picture these crossings were easy and the opposition was merely a token force, to the patients it made little difference how light the casualties had been; they were wounded, so to them it was a rough fight. The patients, however, were greatly cheered by the rapid progress which was being made, and there were a number of gripes about not being able to be with the first troops into Paris. For several days the patients were admitted at a similar rate to the Ste. Mere-Eglise set-up, and the hospital personnel again worked long hours each day.

A few days after the liberation of Paris on August 26, the 77th received several hundred patients from German hospitals there. These men were for the most part British and American airmen who had been shot down over France during the air bombardment of Fortress Europe. After capture, the wounded were sent to the Luftwaffe hospitals in Paris, and a number of them had been there since the year before. These patients were all very thin and malnourished. They said the food which they had received was for the most part soup, black bread, cheese and *ersatz* coffee. Occasional small quantities of highly adulterated tobacco had been issued to them. The French civilians who worked in the hospital had brought them news of the Allied invasion of Normandy and the subsequent progress on to Paris. These same civilians had smuggled in small quantities of food and wine from their meager rations. The patients stated their medical treatment had been fairly good, although there was a marked shortage of medical supplies and of many drugs. Bandages and dressings were of poor quality and instead of cotton sheet wadding under the casts, the Germans had used a paper substitute. The plaster of Paris was definitely inferior to the American brands. The essential treatments had been carried out, but the standard of medical care was below that given in the American Army, and consequently the Americans and British taken prisoner by the Germans had received much poorer medical treatment than the enemy had received in the American hospitals. The fact that they had been repatriated and were on the way home was sufficient to bolster the spirits of the most despondent. American cigarettes and food and the treatment given to these men by the hospital was supplemented by the best possible care and efforts for their comfort that could be given. Dressings were changed and the wounds cleaned up; casts were re-

moved and new comfortable ones applied. Baths, clean pajamas, clean sheets and treatment for their body lice and scabies added to their sense of comfort and well-being. The patients, leaving the hospital on their way to England, appeared to be an entirely different group of men from those who had arrived from Paris such a short time before.

Hundreds of prisoners were taken as the Allied forces advanced, and as a large prisoner bag was always reflected in an increased number of admissions of prisoner-of-war patients, the prisoner wards were soon filled up and other space had to be made available. The enlisted men's mess tent, which also served as a theater in the evening, was taken over for this purpose. 140 cots were set up in four long rows, and within twenty-four hours this new "big-top" ward was filled. As the personnel of the hospital were busy at their regular tasks, the crew for this ward had to be recruited from sections of the hospital where the men would be least missed. Maj. Bartlett assumed charge of the ward during the day, and Lt. Col. Rumold during the night, in addition to their other duties. Capt. Leslie Williams assumed responsibility for the records and did an excellent job. Pfc. Wild and Pfc. Fiechter, the company barbers, were assigned to this ward, and as both of these men spoke German perfectly, they made excellent corpsmen. Others were sent in for a few hours, or occasionally for an entire day or night. The prisoner-of-war patients were almost all severely wounded, and in keeping with the usual policy of the hospital, were given the same priority as the Allied patients as far as the operating room was concerned. Many of the wounds had been neglected as the injured soldiers had been left by their retreating comrades and not found by the American troops for several days. The infections which had developed during this time complicated the treatment and added to the seriousness of their injuries. These men were all in good general physical condition, although they had not been well fed and they wolfed the rations which were served to them. This food was the same given to the Allied patients, but the serving of it was made difficult by the lack of containers and utensils. As the hospital was equipped to feed 750 patients, and the census was well over a thousand on several of the days during this time, these men had to be fed after the other wards had served their patients and washed the trays. After a few days, however, more utensils and containers were obtained and the feeding problem was simplified.

Among the patients received here were a number of civilians as the hospital facilities in many of the towns in France had been upset by the progress of the troops, and also there were many natives on the roads returning to homes which had been liberated. In addition, a few were injured by stepping on mines while working in their fields, and, less frequently, one of the civilians set off a booby trap which the Germans had left but had not been found and inactivated by the troops. Nearly all of the patients were evacuated by air from a field at Eutamps where the 7th Field Hospital was set up as a holding unit. During the last part of the stay at Chartres, a number of patients were received from long distances, one having traveled nearly a hundred miles by ambulance, as the 7th and 77th were the only hospitals in this vicinity. September 5, the hospital was ordered to close, although there were still a number of patients who had not been evacuated. Of these, five were seriously ill: a severely burned tanker, one patient with a serious chest wound, and three abdominal cases

who had undergone operations only a few days before. While they were seriously ill, it was felt that it would be safe to transfer them to the air strip, and accordingly they were loaded in two ambulances, and accompanied by a medical officer. The trip was made without mishap, and the patients were delivered at the airfield in good condition.

With the liberation of Paris, a number of "sneak" trips were made to this city, as everyone was eager to get to Paris and the personnel had no idea where the next move might take the hospital. A pass which legally allowed the bearer to travel fifteen miles from camp was stretched into the forty miles to Paris, and by racing with time, the party could get back to camp before the pass expired. A large number of quasi-official trips were made even the first few days after the liberation. Since these visits had to be so hurried, very little of Paris could be seen. A number of trucks took many of the hospital personnel into Chartres to see the cathedral, one of the most famous structures of this type in France. Its outstanding features were the two symmetrical towers in the front, and the huge round stained glass window, although the latter had been removed and stored because of the danger from bombing.

The famous Red Ball highway ran past the 77th. The armored columns of the First and Third Armies were moving ahead at such a rapid pace that the normal supply channels were unable to keep up with them. Adding to this, every mile which was gained lengthened the already strained supply lines, and extreme measures were being taken to supply the troops so they could continue the advance. The Transport Command of the Army Air Forces was flying gasoline and food to the tank spearheads, and also maps as the troops had run off those which they carried. La Harve was still in the hands of the Germans, which denied us this large port and the possible transportation up the River Seine. The harbor at Cherbourg was just beginning to function and as yet the load which it could receive was not extensive. A line for carrying gasoline consisting of three six-inch spiral-welded pipes was being laid from the Normandy peninsula into central France, but despite the efforts of the engineers to finish this project, it had not been completed. As a final resort, this express highway, called the Red Ball, was organized. It ran over the best roads in this section of France, and all priority freight and personnel convoys were sent over it. The route was well marked with a sign of a large red ball, and the particular truck units which made this run were identified by a red ball painted on the bumper. These trucks, driven mostly by Negro drivers, were on the road night and day, with the assistant driver sleeping, then taking over while the driver had some rest. By fast, hard driving almost continuously, these service troops were making possible the rapid advance of the combat troops. These convoys of sometimes hundreds of trucks came past the camp at all hours of the day and night, whizzing along almost bumper to bumper, slowing for nothing. The trucks were heavily loaded with gasoline, rations, and ammunition, the three essentials of any military advance.

During the latter part of the stay here, blackout restrictions for the trucks were eased to the point where they might use their lights on the roads south of Paris. Having seen nothing but blackout for so long, it was an unusual sight when the first lighted convoy was seen speeding down the road toward camp. Light after light stretched off

into the distance, as if signaling the victories which the Allied armies were winning. On the main Paris-Chartres road, the long tank convoys rolled forward, and for several days the roar of the medium and heavy tanks was almost continuous. Standing at the edge of camp, one could watch for hours the stream of tanks and armored vehicles that passed.

Watching these important supply arteries, the personnel of the 77th saw hospital units moving up, and with the news of closing knew that the order to move would not be long in coming. In the late afternoon of September 5, the order was received for the move from Chartres, and the advance party in charge of Maj. Harless, Capt. Bennett, and Capt. Newman left that evening to reconnoiter the site in the Ste. Menehould area. The first group of trucks pulled in that evening, were loaded, and left early the next morning. The second convoy left just after noon the next day, and included all the nurses. The third and last group of trucks arrived the evening of the 6th of September, were loaded, and departed the following morning. These trucks were the twelve-ton semi-trailer type, the first of this kind which had been used to move the unit.

The plan for movement of this large hospital unit, which had been worked out while the 77th was at La Meskiana in Africa, continued to work smoothly and to pay dividends for the time and effort spent on perfecting it. The amount of time required for a move now depended on the distance to be traveled and the number of trucks which would be available. As the unit had so few vehicles, these were sufficient to carry only the advance party with their equipment, and the necessary kitchen, ward tents, latrines, tools and signs. Approximately 120 two-and-one-half ton trucks were required for a move, or seventy-five of the ten-ton trucks. Frequently this number of trucks could not be made available to the unit at one time, and therefore the different sections left and arrived at various intervals. The packing of the hospital, loading, unloading and setting up were worked out so thoroughly, and had been carried out so many times by the men, that there was rarely any difficulty or delay in these phases. If all the trucks loaded with the equipment arrived at a new site early in the morning, the hospital could be ready to receive patients that evening, although not completely set up. The most important tents were always pitched first, then, in case patients did arrive before they were expected, they could be admitted and receive care. No patient was ever turned away, and the 77th never asked the regulating center to send fewer patients. As each department, section and ward functioned individually during the set-up period, all the personnel were fully employed and there was no duplication or overlapping of effort.

After the advance party arrived at the Ste. Menehould area, they were instructed to find a site near Verdun in the vicinity of Clermont en Argonne. The site was selected and preparations for the arrival of the remainder of the hospital started. The first section had no difficulty during their trip and arrived without mishap on the evening of the 6th of September. The second section was not so fortunate. This convoy included the nurses and their equipment, three officers and about one-third of the enlisted men. The trucks had loaded and left the Chartres site shortly after noon as a light rain was falling. As there were no tarps on the trucks, they had trouble keeping dry; many of the men found a practical use for the cellophane

gas capes which made an ideal protective covering through which they could see the country. The rain continued all during the trip to Paris, and as traffic was heavy, this part of the ride was very slow, and it was not until about six o'clock in the evening that they entered the outskirts of the city. Huddling on top of the equipment, cold and wet in the downpour, the nurses and men had their first glimpse of this famed city under rather adverse circumstances. The convoy was still far from the destination as night came on, so the convoy commander found a place to bivouac on the outskirts of Meaux. The shelter was a shed, consisting of a roof, open sides, and a number of bales of hay. From the K-ration cartons and cans, cigarette butts, and papers strewn about, it was apparent that this site had been used by both American and German troops as a stopping place. The nurses unloaded and made what preparations they could for the night. A temporary latrine was improvised with the aid of three poles and one blanket. As there was a truck load of blankets in the convoy, adequate cover was available. Beds were made according to individual preference; some crawled onto the top of the hay stack, others pulled a couple of bales together to form a satisfactory bed, a few scattered some straw about on the ground and slept on this, and some crawled in amid the equipment on the trucks. As it continued to rain during the night, the tarps were found and put on the trucks, over equipment, nurses and all. The following morning the nurses, stiff and bedraggled, were soon loaded and on their way to the new site where they arrived early in the afternoon.

The third convoy was delayed in their start by the failure of the trucks to appear at the expected time. Except for one kitchen and two supply tents, the camp was completely packed early in the afternoon. The officers and men who were left sat and stood in the cold drizzle for an hour or so and then began to look for some type of shelter. There was a large stack of equipment covered with several canvas flies, and by propping up the edge of this canvas, protection from the rain was available for most of the men. The shower pipes and floor had been removed, but the roof was still on the frame and there was space here for several more. One small group of individualists put up three poles from lister bag supports and stretched a small tarp over this. With a bit of scrounging, enough wood was found to make a small fire, and by building this close to the tepee-like structure, a measure of comfort was obtained. Wine from the villagers and a bottle of calvados which had been saved for just such an emergency helped pass the long hours during the afternoon and evening, and in addition provided internal warmth to ward off the external cold. When it appeared that the trucks were delayed much longer than expected, two ward tents were pitched again, and here the forty-odd men spent the night. The trucks finally arrived late that evening, were loaded, and made ready for an early start the next morning. After a quick breakfast of cereal and coffee, the officers and men climbed on top of the equipment, and wrapped themselves in overcoats, blankets, pup tents, and tarps to ward off the misty rain which still fell.

On the outskirts of Paris the convoy got off the road, and had to cut back across the center of the city, thus providing an opportunity to see many of the famous and historical buildings which otherwise would have been missed. As the trucks rolled along one of the main streets, one of the trailers was accidentally detached from the truck when the connection broke, and as the convoy continued on its

way, the surprised men were left in the middle of the street, waving and shouting from the top of the trailer. After the remainder of the convoy had passed by and left them stranded in the middle of Paris, the men were not long in appreciating their unusual opportunity. This trailer carried mess supplies and on it were S/Sgt. Virgil D. Jake-way, S/Sgt. Thurman J. Richardson, Pvt. Sidney McDonald, T/5 Earl E. Coffman, Sgt. Frank J. Mascia, T/5 Chun G. Way, T/5 John W. Woodard, T/4 Leo J. Jensen, Pfc. Joseph T. Schmidt, Pvt. Eugene H. Dubeau, T/5 Orville Crawford and Pfc. Ernest H. Stell. Their toilet articles and clothing were on another truck, and they had nothing but the clothes they wore—dirty, muddy fatigue suits. The trailer had become detached on the Rue Claude Bernard, in the heart of the educational district and only a few blocks from the Cathedral of Notre Dame. Just across the street was a large apartment house where a number of teachers at the university lived, and these French civilians took the men into their homes, insisting on providing them with food and a place to live.

Two men were left to guard the truck trailer, and the remaining men reported back every four hours and the guard was changed. The one exception was Stell, who went for a walk shortly after the breakdown, was unable to find his way back to the location and was not seen by the 77th again for six months. As the trailer was loaded with food, which was very scarce in Paris at this time, the men were besieged by civilians wanting to buy the rations, and on two occasions at night there were attempts to steal the food. Neither attempt succeeded and the second thief was caught and turned over to the police. Several stacks of bread were given away when it began to mold. In the apartment house the men were given rooms with comfortable beds and with sheets and pillows, a luxury some of them had not enjoyed for two years. A kitchen was set aside for their use, and they were constantly invited to meals with the French families in the neighborhood, which were accepted as often as possible. Even though food was scarce, the articles obtained on the black market were expertly cooked and the meals very enjoyable. As most of these people spoke English, there was no language barrier to overcome and many good friends were made. The men were shown all the usual points of interest in Paris and bought many souvenirs while the opportunity was present. For the rooms, the food and the many things which the civilians did for the men they would take nothing. After five days of this fortunate interlude, an ordnance truck finally arrived, the men repaired the damage to the trailer connection, and attached the trailer and truck once more. The men left Paris, as one of them stated, "with a crowd waving good-bye, addresses in our pockets, bottles of cognac under our arms, and in our hearts an unforgettable memory of these wonderful people of beautiful Paris."

Meanwhile the remainder of the personnel had arrived at the new site and set up the hospital. This was about fifteen miles from Verdun and near the village of Clermont en Argonne. The site was in a valley between two densely wooded hills of the Argonne Forest. One of the main highways to the front-line area ran along the edge of camp, and along the side of the hill opposite was a railroad. A ridge in the meadow used for the hospital provided a location for the headquarters tents, and on the flat ground below this was the hospital itself. In two adjoining meadows, the tents for the personnel were set up.

The hospital was ready to receive patients the day after

arrival, but was not officially opened until September 14. The character of the war had changed and with it the number of casualties was less. After the Seine crossings and the liberation of Paris, the swift Allied advances had continued. Taking advantage of the disorganization of the enemy, the general tactics now were a continued advance to the northeast of Paris toward Belgium. The American First Army was in the center, the American Third Army on the right, the British on the left encircling La Harve and driving north toward Dieppe. The Canadians advanced along the coast, cleaning out the strong points. The Germans were now a number of scattered battle groups, disorganized, demoralized, short of equipment, and with poor liaison. Towns famous in the last war because of the bitter fights now fell with little or no fighting. The 5th Infantry Division took Rheims, the 7th Armored Division liberated Chateau-Thierry and advanced toward Verdun. The 35th Infantry Division and elements of the 4th Armored Division swept into the St. Mihiel-Commercy area. Troyes fell to the 4th Armored Division, and the 80th Infantry Division took Chalons on September 2, the Ninth Infantry Division crossed into Belgium and proceeded toward Charleroi, while the 3rd Armored Division took Mons. The First Army now headed toward Brussels, with the V corps protecting the right flank. The 79th Infantry Division of the Third Army secured the bank of the Moselle with the capture of Epinal on September 10, and the same day the French Armored Division made contact with the Seventh Army coming up from the south at Chaumont. The 35th Infantry, 80th Infantry, and the 4th and 6th Armored Divisions took Nancy and cleared the surrounding area. The 7th Armored Division broke out of their Meuse bridgehead and drove toward Metz. In the north, the First Army continued the liberation of Belgium and on September 12, a patrol of the 3rd Armored Division crossed into Germany near Walheim and on the left flank the 1st Infantry Division occupied Gemmenick. Now the progress slowed, and the war settled down to gains measured in yards rather than miles.

The hospital was open for twenty-three days at Clermont and during this time admitted only 1,155 patients. Many of these had passed through more forward evacuation and field hospitals and so this group of patients needed little care before continuing their trip to the rear. Hospital trains ran from Verdun, and the majority of the patients were transferred to a general hospital at Verdun and then evacuated by train. A moderate number of prisoner of war patients was received, until in one day over a hundred were admitted. These men had been on a German hospital train which was captured, and the patients sent back to hospitals in the Verdun area. With the sudden increase in the prisoner of war patients, it was necessary to take over the theater tent again. This time, however, it was needed for only a few days and so no cots were set up, leaving the patients on litters, which were just as comfortable but made their care more difficult. In their disorganized retreat, the enemy supply lines had failed and many of the prisoner of war patients had not eaten for days. They ate ravenously, and were surprised to be given white bread, which many of them had not even seen for years. A number of prisoners taken in the vicinity of the hospital were admitted in addition to those who were sent back from the front. This former group were stragglers from the retreating German armies, cut off from the main body of troops during the withdrawal into Germany. Traveling

at night, hiding and resting during the day, some of them had walked for hundreds of miles from southern and central France. Most of their travel had been through the woods and fields, and they had few opportunities to obtain food. One was received who had eaten nothing but green apples for sixteen days. All of them were dirty and exhausted. Many would have given themselves up much earlier had they been able to contact American troops for surrender, as they feared the French Forces of the Interior and had no wish to be taken by them.

Another group of unusual patients was received from some of the small towns which were encountered in the advance, especially as the troops came into the coal mining district. Here were found some of the slave laborers imported by the Germans, mostly Poles, Russians and French. These men had been worked and starved almost to the point of death, and several of them died after reaching the hospital simply because of exhaustion and starvation. In addition, they had received practically no medical care and many of them had tuberculosis in the far advanced stage. Their gratitude for the food and care was profound when they were still sufficiently alive to register any emotion or feeling.

The highway which ran alongside the camp was one of the main arteries for the flow of supplies into the Metz area. Day after day long convoys passed. For the first time the amphibious ducks were seen in large numbers, suggesting immediately to everyone that the Rhine crossing was imminent. As the offensive at Metz drew to a close and about the same time more of the railroads were repaired, the road traffic became less. The railroad running along the side of the hill across the road from camp carried an increasing number of freight trains. The small French engines were scarcely able to climb the slight rise in the railbed at this point, and repeatedly the trains backed down the hill for a mile for a fresh start. During the night these dashes for the top of the rise, followed by the slowing tempo of the puffing engine, and the final agonizing struggle to get over the top sounded like an old melodrama from an early movie. At times the train had to wait until another engine could come back from Verdun, and then the combined efforts of both topped the hill with little trouble. Long hospital trains passed up and back this line on the way to and from Verdun. On several occasions one of these trains with a GI crew stopped for an hour or so while one of the crewmen came down to the hospital for some urgent dental work.

During the early part of the stay here and to a lesser extent later on, the members of the French Forces of the Interior maintained a guard on the roads and bridges, and sent patrols into the hills of the Argonne Forest around camp. Hardly a night passed that small arms fire was not heard from the hills, and on several occasions, the rattle of machine guns came out of the dense forest. Tracers were seen shooting across the camp. The guards of the hospital had more fear of injury from these men, who shot first and talked later, than from any possible enemy or saboteur. Actually the hospital guards spent more time chasing cows out of the hospital area than at any other single pursuit. These cows seemed particularly prone to wander into the nurses' area, and a number of scares occurred when a cow came too close to a tent in the middle of the night. Finally, a special night guard was posted around the nurses' area, although during the day the nurses chased the cows themselves.

In the woods across the road from the hospital was a sanatorium for children with tuberculosis. Most of the patients came from the Paris area, and told of the scarcity of food during the German occupation, even though they received extra rations. Several of the nurses of the 77th fixed up parcels of food, candy and chewing gum and delivered them to the sanatorium. Later the children who were well enough to walk about were brought down to the



CHASING CATTLE FROM THE NURSES' AREA

hospital. Mass was held for them by Chaplain McEvoy, after which they walked all through the hospital area. The outing seemed to be quite a holiday for the children and they enjoyed everything.

In the small village of Clermont en Argonne, which was only a few minutes walk from the camp, nearly all of the hospital personnel visited several points of local interest. The villagers told of a gruelling experience which they had gone through during their liberation. When the American armored columns passed through, the remnants of the German garrison took to the hills. When the Americans had gone on, the Germans returned to the village and cold-bloodedly murdered the mayor and several other of the prominent citizens, ransacked their homes, and then left in their flight back to Germany. Most of the homes in Clermont appeared to be hundreds of years old, constructed of stone, and built on the very edge of the road. In the village square a large memorial of stone had been erected to the villagers who had lost their lives in the first World War. Every day fresh flowers were placed at the base of this monument. From the square, stone steps led half way up a steep hill to an ancient church, built during the sixteenth century. Although the church was small and from the outside appeared very plain, the interior was beautiful. The statuary was exquisitely carved, and the stained glass windows depicting scenes from the Old Testament were striking as the afternoon sun shone through them. A series of twelve carved plaques showed the last days of the Life of Christ, with the Betrayal, the Crucifixion, and the Ascension. The altar—in fact the entire church—was kept scrupulously clean by the women of the village.

From this church a narrow road gradually ascended the slope of the hill. Along this road were a number of large caves, carved out of the stone of the hillside, and well concealed in the woods. Each cave consisted of several large rooms, all interconnecting. From the natives it was learned that these had been constructed by Americans during the

last war, as observation posts looking down onto the valley. At the top of the hill was a small chapel in a grove of tall trees. Several plum and apple trees were found nearby and the fruit was excellent after the long hot climb up the hill. Benches had been built in this pleasant spot, and from the elevation one could see down the valley for several miles. To the northeast the flat plain extended for miles with low, rolling hills on the western edge. Far in the distance was a tall white shaft which was a memorial in the American cemetery near Verdun. From the newspapers and records found here it was evident that the Germans had used this spot as a bivouac area or observation post only a few days before the arrival of the 77th.

In this grove of trees several picnics were held, among them one in which the Commanding Officer was a member of the party. A number of the village children who were playing near the chapel were asked over to share the popcorn. Apparently they had never eaten it before, and were astonished when the small brown grains became so large and white. With only a little urging by Col. Walker, they ate messkit after messkit full of this new confection. They were soon the best of friends with the members of the party and were playing and laughing much as American children might have done.

All the amateur photographers had an opportunity to use the film which had been hoarded for so long. The scenes about the camp, in the village and on the top of the hill were taken repeatedly. As the hospital was not functioning, and there was very little actual work to do, the x-ray darkroom was a busy place as many of the personnel went there at night to develop their exposed film.

During this time numerous trips were made to Verdun, Epervan, Rheims, Chalons and as far distant as Paris. In Verdun there had been considerable damage by artillery and bombs, particularly in the business district of the town. The largest hotel had received a direct hit and a number of stores were masses of rubble. The church had received a near miss and moderate damage resulted. The most intense bombing which Verdun had suffered occurred on the night when the advance party of the 77th arrived at Clermont. The impressive memorial erected after the first World War was intact. This massive figure, located on a high elevation in the fortress area near the center of town was approached by a long series of white stone steps. The statue, representing victory, was also in white stone and looked down on the town. Verdun was the key point in the area's defenses in the last war, and had been stormed innumerable times by the Germans but never fell. The total dead for both sides then was well over one-half million men, the larger part being French. The memorial was dedicated to these men who had given their lives in the defense of this town, and on the base of the statue was carved the immortal words, "They shall not pass."

Not far from Verdun, was the famous Valquoil Hill, an important observation point. In the early part of the first war the Germans had stormed the hill several times with huge losses before wresting it from the French. About a year later the French began the attacks to retake the hill as it was essential before any major offensive could be started in the vicinity. Every type of attack, trick and explosive was used and hundreds of men died, but still the Germans held the hill. At last the French tunneled for hundreds of yards under the hill and planted huge charges of dynamite. When exploded, this literally blew the hill

to pieces, and at the same time a massive frontal attack took place. The hill was won, but at the cost of thousands of lives. As one of the most unusual memorials ever created, this area was left just as it was the day the war ended. The village which stood at the summit had been pounded by explosives so many times that only brick dust remained; the huge craters from the dynamite were not filled and these were thirty yards across and forty yards deep. Helmets, grenades, rifles, knives, trenches, messkits, dugouts

—everything remained as it was in 1918. One trench which caved in just before the final assault showed the bayonets protruding from the ground, held by the men who were buried alive.

Sight-seeing trips to Paris were very desirable, but usually difficult to attain. As the trucks had to make a number of legitimate trips into Paris, the transportation was not too difficult to arrange. A captain in the French Army who was liaison officer with the 79th Infantry Division came to



the hospital for some complicated dental work. In gratitude to Lieutenant William I. Gautschi for this work, he made two trips into Paris and carried a number of officers each time in his captured touring car. The various reasons used to obtain passes to Paris at times bordered on the ridiculous. A total of eight officers went to Paris at various times for the purpose of getting barium for the x-ray department until one officer, unfortunately, found some which he brought back. Close relatives and long lost friends were suddenly found to be stationed in Paris, and a visit was exceedingly important to the parties involved. One officer, who knew not one word of French, went to Paris to purchase some medical textbooks. Others found their wardrobes suddenly depleted, and a trip to the quartermaster clothing store was absolutely necessary. The enlisted men had no difficulty in finding equally pertinent reasons for riding the truck going in for the PX supplies and to the other supply depots in the Paris area.

All the trips to Paris were described with remarkable general similarity by each group after returning. All had visited the usual points of interest: Notre Dame Cathedral, Eiffel Tower, *Arc de Triomphe*, Red Cross at Rainbow Corner, Versailles and the *Casino de Paris*. Usually they visited night clubs, but all returned with the same story of outrageous prices for inferior wines and champagne. The Follies Bergere had opened and attendance was high. Visits to the Montmartre were accomplished with some difficulty including dodging the military police, but several spent an evening in this famous quarter. The university district with its numerous small cafes attracted much attention. Perfume was the one article bought by everyone and included all the well known name brands. It seemed rather strange to hear a group of men discussing "what's good" in the line of perfume. It soon developed that not one man in fifty knew what kind of perfume would be preferred at home, but this did not deter them from buying large amounts. The price of the perfume was about a tenth of what it was in the States, and as it was sent home as a gift, there was no duty to be paid. The amount of perfume sent home during this time should have been adequate to make every woman in the States irresistible for the next year. At first some silk clothing could be purchased, and one officer bought silk pajamas for his three children, but the prices on such apparel were soon too high. Kodak film, pipes, costume jewelry, picture postcards, maps and other souvenirs were all purchased to be sent home. Two points were agreed upon by every person who visited Paris, that the prices were too high, and that it was the most beautiful city they had ever seen.

In Rheims, visits were made to the world famous cathedral, which was of striking beauty despite the removal of the stained glass windows. This cathedral, and the one at Chartres, had been measured inch by inch, and if totally destroyed by the war, could have been reproduced exactly from these records. This city has been called the champagne center of the world, and a number of trips were made to purchase a supply for the bars in the two recreation tents. In Epernay, large quantities of champagne were also available. Several trips were made through Chalons-sur-Marne and Ste. Menchould. Here an impressive example of the fall from power of the German air force was seen. An important bridge had been blown up and was being reconstructed by the engineers. At night they continued to work under the blaze of glaring lights in flaunt-

ing defiance of anything the Germans and their Luftwaffe might wish to do.

Not far from Verdun a German medical supply dump had been captured and here a number of medical officers obtained a few surgical instruments. Word of the capture of this dump did not get to the 77th until after several other groups of medical officers from hospitals in the vicinity had gone through the dump, so there were few instruments of great value left. There were, however, a number of medicines picked up by medical supply which were useful in the treatment of some of the prisoner-of-war patients. Their plaster of Paris and bandages were much inferior to the American types and so were not used. From



RHEIMS CATHEDRAL

this same dump a large number of heavy quilted pajama pants were brought back and distributed. They made excellent linings for a sleeping sack, padding for home-constructed foot lockers, and were very warm if worn on one of the cold truck rides. In the opposite direction, near Ste. Menchould, a German freight train had been wrecked when hit by rockets from the American air attacks. This train was loaded entirely with new German parachutes, made of excellent silk, and in perfect condition. When the freight train was wrecked, the cars were broken open, and the bundles of parachutes were scattered all over the ground along the tracks. A guard had been posted to keep the civilians away, but GI's were permitted to pick up one at any time. A large number of these parachutes were brought back to camp, and before cutting them up prior to packing, several men strapped the parachutes on and ran about the area until the parachute blossomed out into a huge umbrella. Sections and even entire parachutes were sent home to be made into pajamas and scarfs.

With champagne available in quantity from two of the largest champagne-producing centers in France, and at reasonable prices at first, this drink flowed rather freely on several occasions. One of these was a party held by the enlisted men in which there was a bottle of champagne per man. As with the officers and nurses, many of them had never tasted this sparkling wine before, and had no idea as to its potentialities, until one bottle of champagne proved to be more than one man could safely imbibe. The whoops and singing which came from the enlisted men's recreation tent indicated that they were having a good, if wet, party. The following morning reveille was a task, even for the bugler, and a number learned that a drink of water

will bring back the full effects of the drinks consumed the night before.

During the latter part of the stay here, the weather became cold. Fall was well on the way. The rains began and scarcely a day passed without at least one shower. As there



GERMAN PARACHUTE

were no patients, the hospital personnel found it difficult to find a means of spending so much time on these cold rainy days. Electric lights for reading were put in the officers' and nurses' tents, but none in those of the enlisted men. There were no stoves in the living quarters, so a lot of time was spent in trying to keep warm. Captain Plaut, tired of shaving in the ice cold water in the morning, and shivering throughout the day, bought a streamlined, two-burner, super-special kerosene stove, and was the envy of half the camp until it came time to pack for a move. The barber shop was one of the tents where a stove was permitted, and T/5 Adolph Wild and Pfc. Arndt Fiechtner had more than the usual number of haircuts as their customers came more to get warm than for the haircut. A small amount of coal and wood chips were scrounged, and fires were allowed in the two recreation tents. The number

of people attending breakfast decreased considerably, as the sun was not up until after the breakfast hour, and getting out of a warm bed into the cold for powdered eggs was not a paying proposition.

The meals during this time varied from excellent to not-so-good. A German ration dump had been captured in the vicinity, and a considerable part of the rations drawn were from this dump. Delicious sardines and cheese were among the other foods issued. The cheese was put up in a collapsible tube like toothpaste, and was of the variety which "smells so bad but tastes so good." The German canned meat ration was much better than the American variety in most types. In addition to these rations, several issues of eggs and oranges were obtained and added greatly to the diet. Fresh green salad of tomatoes, cucumbers and onions were also served on several occasions. At times the old standby, ten-in-one rations, were all that were issued, and while compared to the K-rations given to the men at the front this might have been a treat, having eaten ten-in-one all the way across France, they had lost what attraction they may have had.

When the hospital was at work, there was little time for recreation and entertainment. When the theater tent was taken over for the prisoner-of-war patients, the movies were held outside on the hill behind the headquarters tents. After the patients had been evacuated, the movies were once again shown in the theater tent. The film at this time was obtained from the special service office at Rheims, and as this offered an excellent excuse for a daily trip to this city, the jeep always carried several others who were interested in shopping or sightseeing. As they did not start back until the last minute, the movie film almost invariably arrived about ten minutes after show time, the jeep driving down into the area near the "Big Top" like a dashing courier with news of overwhelming importance. Even with such a system, the name of the movie for the evening was spread all over camp within five minutes after the arrival of the jeep. Two USO shows appeared at the hospital during this stop. One in particular was memorable because of the lovely young lady who sang South American tunes in the approved manner. The GI orchestra



which accompanied her also drew loud applause from the audience. Bing Crosby and his group appeared at the 112th Evacuation Hospital which was located near Verdun, but as no advance notice of this show had been given, only a few of the enlisted men found out about it in time to arrive just as the performance began.

Another type of recreation came in the form of arguments as to the time the war in Europe would end. The rapid advance of the Allied Armies across France and Belgium into the very teeth of the Siegfried Line on the "sacred soil of the Fatherland" raised the hopes of many for an early cessation of hostilities. The optimism was at a new high, not seen at any other period in the war, and there were many who backed their convictions with wagers. Bets that the war in Europe would be over by December 7 were commonly made, and there was plenty of money which said that the war would end by the first of February. With this interest in wagering, there developed an increasing interest in the World Series which was to be played soon. To give everyone a chance to get into the pool, a total score system for the series was used. The squares on the master board were sold rapidly, and interest in the World Series rose even higher. A few of the radios about camp were dependable enough to get the games, and the enthusiasts crowded about them every evening long before game time.

The area when first occupied had been a fine sod with a thick growth of grass, but as the weather changed, the rains soaked the ground and the sod on the roads gave way, with each passing truck deepening the ruts. Gravel thrown onto the road simply sank out of sight, with each rain the mud became worse, and finally the roads and paths were almost impassable. Walks were built and heavily graveled, which made excellent footing along the side of the roads, but crossing a road remained a major feat, for these were now broad areas of thick, sticky mud ankle deep in the shallow spots.

By this time everyone was worn out with the trips and the resting, and thoroughly disgusted with the mud. The prospect of spending the winter in tents in this swampy site was not pleasant, and it was with relief that orders were finally received for a move to Belgium. As usual at such a time the rumors changed hourly: First, the hospital was to go into buildings, then into tents; the move was to Liege, later to the Aachen area, then back to Liege, again into buildings, etc. As it turned out, it was only after the advance party had reached Advance Section Headquarters that anyone knew exactly where the hospital was to go. The advance party, under the supervision of Maj. Harless, Capt. McGowan, Capt. Newman, and Capt. Bennett, left early on the morning of October 7.

STE. MERE-EGLISE PROMOTIONS AND COMMISSIONS

AUGUST, 1944:

TO TECHNICIAN 4TH GRADE—Frederick L. Schloredt.

TO TECHNICIAN 5TH GRADE—Robert L. Kolb.

JOINED THE UNIT

JULY, 1944:

Arthur F. Belote and Pfc. Eugene Schaffernegger.

LEFT THE UNIT

JULY, 1944:

Pvt. John J. Laufhutte to ADCZ Hdqs.

ST. LO PROMOTIONS AND COMMISSIONS

AUGUST, 1944:

TO LT. COL.—Mervin J. Rumold.

TO W. O. J. G.—Paul M. Tackett

TO TECHNICIAN 5TH GRADE—Joseph B. Martello.

No one joined the unit at St. Lo.

LEFT THE UNIT

AUGUST, 1944:

Natalie Gould, A.R.C., to A.R.C. Hdqs., London.

LE MANS

No promotions or commissions, no one joined the unit.

LEFT THE UNIT

AUGUST, 1944:

2nd Lt. Roberta F. Cross to the hospital.

CHARTRES PROMOTIONS AND COMMISSIONS

SEPTEMBER, 1944:

TO TECHNICIAN 5TH GRADE—William J. B. King.

No one joined or left the unit.

CLERMONT EN ARGONNE

PROMOTIONS AND COMMISSIONS

OCTOBER, 1944:

TO CORPORAL—Donnie Locklear.

TO TECHNICIAN 5TH GRADE—Orville D. Duncan.

No one joined the unit.

LEFT THE UNIT

SEPTEMBER, 1944:

2nd Lt. Helen M. Smith and T/5 Harold E. Sherrill to the hospital; Pvt. Ira F. Sherwood to the 10th Field Hospital.



Chapter VIII

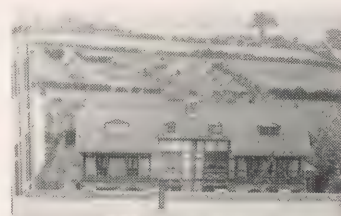
THE advances by the troops had not been great as measured in miles, but they were very important gains. The air-borne invasion into southern Holland on September 17 had not accomplished the entire mission, but it had made possible the expansion of the Allied area beyond Nijmegen. The American First Army had continued its advance and on October 2 launched an attack north of Aachen, penetrated the Siegfried Line by October 6; then attacking southwest of Aachen, the pincers move around the city was begun. The American Third Army was attacking at Metz, while the American Ninth Army and the Canadian First Army continued to clear out the by-passed ports along the channel. The American Seventh and the French First Armies were at the Belfort Gap. All along the line, probing attacks and continuous pressure persisted, but when and where the big push would come was not known.

Fifty trucks arrived at the Clermont site at eight-thirty on the morning of October 7, were loaded, and left in two sections, one at ten-forty and the other at noon. Both of these convoys arrived at the destination that evening. The third group of forty trucks arrived at the old site that same evening and left on the morning of the following day. The convoys took slightly divergent routes north, one going through Namur, another going through Arlon and Bastogne. The trip was pleasant and not eventful. The group which followed the route along the Meuse River were much

interested in the canal that paralleled the river. Water is kept at the appropriate level in the canal by dams along the river, which turn part of the water into the canal. In the time of peace, this canal was an important part of the freight transportation in this section. The first two sections moved on Sunday, and the natives were out along the roads in the country and streets in the villages, dressed in their best, on their way to or from church, or just out for a walk. As in France, the Belgian civilians waved and smiled as the trucks passed. Some of the personnel had trouble in knowing what country they were in as they confused the black, yellow, and red flag of Belgium with the horizontally striped flag of Luxembourg, or the vertically striped flag of the Netherlands. The towns appeared neat and clean, and showed very little artillery or bomb damage.

The advance party had been instructed by Col. C. H. Beasley's office at ADSEC Headquarters to proceed to Verviers, Belgium, and to set up the hospital in a school building, the *Ecole Normale de l'Etat*. This was a large brick building of recent construction, located on top of a hill overlooking the town. The Germans had used it as an induction station for foreign conscripts. There were several minor inadequacies in the building from the standpoint of its use as a hospital; but on the whole, it was very well adapted for this new purpose. The most difficult feature which could not be overcome was the number of stairways which it was necessary to climb and descend with patients. One small elevator served the entire building, and this

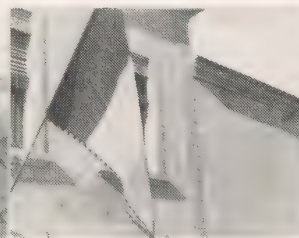
was not large enough to hold a litter so that it could be used only for supplies and other small loads. The classrooms were all of various sizes and all well suited for conversion into wards. Built in the shape of a square around a courtyard, the building contained a basement and first floor which extended about the four sides. In the two wings and back were second and third floors, topped by a garret. In the front basement was a long hallway which was set up as a ward for ambulatory patients. Off this hall were a number of small rooms which were used as the morgue, PX and storage space. A large dining room and kitchen in the right wing were taken over as the pa-



HOSPITAL SUPPLIES STORED IN THE SCHOOL COURTYARD



HOSPITAL EQUIPMENT LOADED FOR THE MOVE FROM CLERMONT TO VERVIERS



ONE TRUCK LOAD OF NURSES LEAVING CLERMONT CAMP



ONE OF THE MANY BELGIAN FLAGS WAVING FROM A WINDOW

THE CANAL PARALLELING THE MEUSE RIVER

tient's mess. In the rear basement were two long rooms, one used by the Red Cross and the other as the chapel. The left wing of the basement held the officers' and nurses' kitchen, dining room, and recreation room. Along the inside of the two latter rooms was a large air raid shelter. On the first floor in the front, the administrative offices were set up, with headquarters located in the library of the school. In the left wing, a long narrow room extending the



THE SCHOOL USED AS A HOSPITAL

length of the building became the receiving section; and along the side of this toward the courtyard was the gymnasium of the school which was converted into a one hundred-bed ward for the most seriously ill surgical patients. On the right wing of the first floor along a wide hallway were four rooms which were occupied by the x-ray department, central supply, and surgical headquarters. In the corner of this floor near surgical headquarters was a classroom of moderate size which was ideal as an operating room. Along the back of the first floor was a series of small classrooms. The first of these was given over to the plaster room and workroom for the operating room. The other five were converted into wards, four for the orthopedic cases, and the last for neurosurgery. In the rear corner, opposite the receiving department and the gymnasium, another large classroom was taken over as the minor surgery and nose and throat clinic. On the second floor, the front corner on the left was occupied by the dental department, sick-call room and the barber shop, while the right front corner was given to medical supply. A number of large classrooms in the right and rear wings of this floor were made into surgical wards with the left rear corner room, the former physics laboratory, being occupied by the pharmacy and laboratory. The third floor had been the dormitories for the students, and three large long rooms in each wing had been divided into a number of small cubicles, each just large enough to hold two cots. These three wards were for the medical service, with medical headquarters in the left rear corner room. Linen supply was in a small room at the right rear corner. The fourth floor rear was converted into quarters for the nurses, and the wings were used for storage of the desks, tables, chairs, beds, and numerous other articles which had to be removed from the classrooms and dormitories. Small out buildings were taken over by the supply department, and two tents were erected at the back of the building for the genitourinary section.

When the first convoys arrived on the evening of October

7, the advance party had had time to do very little other than set up one kitchen and make a survey of the building. As it was late in the evening, the personnel unloaded with their personal equipment and went to temporary quarters; the officers and nurses were sent to the third floor wards, and occupied the cubicles, while the enlisted men slept in the various classrooms for that night. The following day tents were erected in a field across from the hospital as quarters for the enlisted men, and the unloading began. The cleaning out of the fourth floor began and the nurses moved into this section.

Unloading of the trucks proved to be a problem. There was only one narrow street to the hospital, which ended in a blind alley, and the front entrance was the only door suitable for carrying in the huge boxes and crates. The trucks pulled up to the front entrance and were unloaded one at a time. The heavy equipment had to be carried up the front steps, across the hall, and out into the courtyard, going down another flight of steps. The equipment was stacked according to department and section, and this difficult task occupied nearly two days for completion. The building had not been occupied as a school for several months. For a time the Germans had used it as an induction station for conscripts, and later, as the American



ENLISTED MEN'S LIVING QUARTERS AT VERVIERS

troops advanced through Verviers, the school had been used as a barracks during overnight stops. Dirt and debris had accumulated in every room; the desks and tables were stacked helter skelter; the windows were opaque with dust and grime; and much cleaning was needed to make it satisfactory for use as a hospital. The double burden of setting up the hospital equipment, cleaning the building and grounds was much more work than the hospital personnel could accomplish in the short time allowed prior to opening the hospital. It was obvious that help would be needed both before and after the hospital opened. For this purpose Belgian civilians were hired.

The toilet facilities in the building, while not adequate according to American standards, were much better than usually found in similar structures in France and Belgium. The toilets were small and the drainage pipes so narrow that they clogged at the slightest overloading. All the toilets were finally put into working condition and by maintaining several plumbers on the job constantly, they were kept that way. On the first floor near the administrative offices was one of the most attractive features of the building. This was a large shower room, containing twenty-four showers. There was a more than adequate supply of

hot water; the room had tiled walls, separate cubicles for each shower, plenty of light, and it soon became one of the most popular spots in the school. The electricity for the hospital was furnished from two sources. The generator of the hospital furnished electricity to the essential points throughout the hospital, such as the operating room, the x-ray department, and a few lights in each ward. The remainder of the power was obtained from the local supply lines, but this was not dependable because of the frequent sabotage attempts on the lines between Verviers and Liege, where the power originated.

Work of setting up the hospital now went forward rapidly. The classrooms were nearly all cleared and cleaned, and cots were being set up in all the wards. To increase the bed capacity of the hospital, cots were also placed in the halls of the first floor near the orthopedic wards, and on the second floor in all the halls. The medical service had started setting up cots in the cubicles in the third floor wards. All departments were rapidly approaching the stage where patients could be admitted. The outside details had been hard at work. As the one narrow street ended at the school building, some means had to be found as an outlet, to prevent the numerous vehicles from having to turn in such a narrow space and to speed up the admission and evacuation of patients when the hospital opened. A road was marked out running around the side and then in the rear of the building, through a small garden and down over a rather steep hill, and thence through a gate into one of the main streets. Gravel was located and purchased with some difficulty, and after the road had been graded, trucks were borrowed from another unit, and the gravel hauled in to complete the road. The enlisted men's area was completely set up, and a mess established near their quarters. A walk was constructed through the field into their area, and another short road built into the motor pool.

Billets had been secured in the homes of the civilians near the hospital, and the officers were moved into the homes. In the majority of cases they were made welcome, though a few resented the intrusion despite the fact that it had been made clear that they were not being forced to take anyone into their homes. Most of the civilians went to great trouble to provide comfortable quarters for the officers, and a number of families moved into crowded rooms so that the officer might have the best room in the house.

The hospital was to open on October 12. On the afternoon of October 11 the setting up of the hospital was nearly completed. The men were established in their tents, the nurses on the fourth floor of the hospital and the officers had been moved to their billets. All were busy at work when planes were heard buzzing overhead about three o'clock in the afternoon. The hospital had been buzzed frequently before by the many friends of hospital personnel who were in the Air Corps. A number of comments were made to the effect that "It didn't take them long to find us this time," but other than this, everyone continued with his or her work, paying no attention to the planes. Suddenly there was the chatter of machine gun fire, then an explosion, followed by another, and then the tinkling of falling glass. The first two planes came directly at the hospital, with the leading plane's machine guns wide open all the way. The second plane dropped two five-hundred-pound bombs which lit in the urology ward just back of the hospital. The other two planes dropped four more bombs on their runs and these hit in the town near the

railroad station. All four planes made two more sweeps, strafing the town, and then flew off.

Sergeant McKenny and Sergeant Fincannon were sitting in the tent office of the urology section, having just finished setting up their department. When they heard the first machine gun fire, they both got up and went out of the tent, thinking that a dog fight was taking place over the town. As they saw the second plane come in, Sergeant McKenny later said, "We watched two little black dots appear from below the fuselage and begin their descent. They gradually became a little larger and seemed to be headed for Sergeant Fincannon's left hip pocket or my right one." Knowing only that the bombs were going to hit close by, the men ran about ten yards down the bank and flattened themselves on the ground along a small drop in the terrace. Sergeant McKenny stated that evening, "An instant later the ground jolted me in the abdomen and my mouth was forced open by the blast. Everything became dim and dark and the dust and smoke were impenetrable. Earth and rocks were dropping around me, and some came rolling down the terrace. The thing that I remember most distinctly was the sound of falling glass. The windowglass in the building fell slowly at first and then with a rush which drowned out any other sound. The rest I observed from grass-blade level.

"As the smoke and dust cleared, Sergeant Fincannon, who was three yards closer to the bomb craters than I,



SGT. McKENNEY REVIEWING WRECKAGE
OF THE UROLOGY WARD

looked over and motioned toward the school building, and then made a run for it. I was about to follow when I saw two bomb bursts down in the town and another plane coming in. The bombs from this plane went high over my head and landed in the town about a quarter of a mile away. This plane strafed, and it wasn't until then that I knew fear. I hadn't time to think before, but with the sound of those machine guns I felt myself grow bigger and bigger until the building seemed small.

"The ward tent was blown apart and was now partly in the onion patch and partly draped around a tree. The office equipment and pyramidal tent were spread in small pieces all over the garden. The two metal chairs we had been sitting on were now masses of twisted steel, and all over hovered the sweetest aroma I have ever inhaled in any garden. Eight bottles of perfume, which were on my cot such a short time before, had completely disappeared.

"Sergeant Fincannon received a sliver of metal in the

back, and I had blood coming from one ear. Later an ordnance officer investigated, measured the distance from the craters to where we lay, and pronounced us theoretically dead. This condition is not serious, which we intend to



BOMB CRATER

Note depth of crater in comparison to the man's height

prove if and when the point system materializes and we are discharged from the army."

Another version of the bombing was given by Sergeant Ryan, who was working in the supply room on the second floor with T/3 Charles J. Dry, T/3 Charles C. Major, Cpl. Virgil L. Kemp, and T/4 Floyd Elliott.

"We had been hearing planes all day," said Sergeant Ryan later, "so this last one was nothing new, except that it came very low. I remember as he passed over one of us said, 'Hey, watch that stuff,' as if talking to the pilot, and then we all went on working. Suddenly to our surprised and unbelieving ears came the unmistakable tat-tat of machine guns. Of course in our room we could see nothing, and some instinct kept us from going to the window and looking out, but we could hear and imagine plenty, so none of us needed a hint to hit the floor and hug it until the plane passed. Jumping up we looked for our helmets, but not wasting much time in the search, and all went sailing out of the room full steam ahead. We had just left the supply room as the second plane came over with guns going full blast. We hit the floor again and a split second later the building shook. I wasn't conscious of any explosion, but I do remember hearing glass breaking all over the building. After this plane passed, we started down the nearest stairway, where we found three nurses just sitting on the steps, looking a little bewildered and not knowing where to go. We shooed them downstairs as the planes started their second and third sweeps, and in between bursts we finally got downstairs and found an air-raid shelter I had not known existed. Needless to say, I was relieved, and I had plenty of company. A few minutes later the excitement ended and I went outside where I met Laing and Spak bringing in Hagan who had been hit in the arm. I remember Laing pointing to his own arm and yelling, 'Goose-pimples,' which sounds funny now but certainly wasn't at the time."

Nearly everyone in the hospital recalled enough of their training to stay away from the windows and only a few were thoughtless enough to look out. Many of the people froze where they were when the raid started, but began

moving rapidly after the bombs hit. Several of the nurses were in their fourth floor quarters, and one of them recalled watching the machine gun bullets "drill a series of holes in the ceiling." Capt. Boyce was with a detail of men from the litter-bearers of the combat exhaustion group who were working on the road when the attack started. Looking around, he discovered himself standing alone, as these men with combat training had sought cover and hit the ground in a split second. A detail of about a dozen men were digging a latrine and setting up the screens in a field near the enlisted men's area. When asked what they did during the raid, one of the men said, "Well, there were twelve of us working around this latrine and the next thing I knew, there were twelve of us *in* the latrine."

Col. Walker was standing just outside the air-raid shelter during the latter part of the strafing when one of the men came running up, yelling, "They can't do this to us. They ought to stop. Why doesn't somebody do something, Colonel?" And the Colonel replied, "Go ahead, *you* do something about it!"

Capt. Shellito was at his quarters when the raid started, and running down the stairs he opened the door just in time to see machine gun bullets tracing a path up the street, ricocheting on and off the walls of the buildings. Several bullets struck a GI truck parked just across the street and it burst into flames.

S/Sgt. Lamont W. Bethune was just arriving in Verviers from France with some of the supplies which had been left behind when the raid started. He watched the entire raid from another hill overlooking the town, and as the bombs fell, he noted some of the civilians pointing to a white brick building on the hill and saying, "Ecole Normale." Bethune said that evening, "Ecole Normale was just so much Greek to me, and I thought what-the-hell-mister they-missed-us-didn't-they? That's the way it is in a raid—you wish the bombs off on someone else, just like you would a rain when you want to go picnicking. Well, I'd probably have been more concerned about the building if I had known at the time that we were using it as a hospital."

The raid had not been over more than a few minutes before the wounded were in the operating room and receiving surgical care. Lieutenant Helen E. Bailey received a wound of the back of the neck from a bomb fragment. Sergeant William H. Hagan had a wound of the left arm from a small fragment which lacerated one of the main blood vessels of the arm. T/4 Arthur L. Fincannon was hit in the back by a bomb fragment. These three patients had wounds of sufficient severity that hospitalization was required. The following received minor wounds from flying glass and bomb fragments and were treated in the dispensary: Lieut. Violet R. Mahan, Lieut. Clio E. Shirley, S/Sgt. Roland B. Stotter, T/3 Donald J. McKenney, Cpl. William I. Alford, T/5 Earl J. Lair, T/5 Elmer E. Rue, T/5 Harlan H. Woody, Pfc. Roy Curtis, Pfc. Othello D. Kugler, Pfc. George W. Phillipi, Pvt. Carl G. Culver, Pvt. Lawrence D. Looper, and Pvt. Joseph T. Schmidt. These people were presented Purple Heart Medals at an appropriate ceremony two days later. Col. Buchnall spoke briefly and Col. Walker made the awards.

The damage done by the bombing was of such extent that the opening of the hospital had to be delayed for two days. The urology ward and office tents were completely wrecked. The two bombs had hit directly on the ward tent, and the cots, blankets, chairs, desks, linens and other ma-

terial had to be replaced. About eighty per cent of the windows in the hospital had been broken. In the pharmacy and laboratory, numerous beakers, test-tubes and similar articles had been broken. The falling plaster and glass had littered every hallway and ward, and numerous pieces of glass hung precariously in the window frames and had to be removed piece by piece. The task of cleaning up the building which had just been finished was now started all over, although this time it was somewhat easier. The replacement of glass in the windows constituted the biggest problem. The hospital would be unable to function until adequate blackout had been attained, and in addition, the cold nights made covering the windows necessary. The civilian workers rapidly placed plywood in the windows to serve temporarily. As each classroom and hall had windows making up nearly all of one wall, this was a huge undertaking in itself. The cleaning of the building again went forward rapidly and at midnight on October 13 the hospital opened. During this night, an air-raid alert was sounded, and as everyone was jittery from the previous bombing, the shelter was soon filled. No planes came over, however.

The mission of the hospital at this time was that of a holding unit. Patients were sent to the 77th from all the field and evacuation hospitals of the First Army. The patients were held until they were able to be transported, and during this period of hospitalization, they were examined, any needed treatments or operations carried out and in general prepared for the trip by train to the rear echelon general hospitals. The hospital trains were loaded by the 77th with the 9th Field Hospital taking a smaller proportion of the patients. As each train had a capacity of around three hundred patients, it was at times necessary to wait for several days before this number of patients was ready for evacuation. At other times, two or three trains were loaded in one day, so rapid was the rate of admission and evacuation. These trains went to Paris and the patients to the general hospitals in the vicinity of Paris. Patients who would be ready for duty in a few days were evacuated to general hospitals in Liege. A smaller number were sent directly to duty from the 77th. The mission of the hospital was actually a combination of triage, holding and evacuation, as after the examination of each patient it was noted whether his illness or injury was of such seriousness that he should be sent to a general hospital in France, in England or to the Zone of the Interior. For a few of the seriously injured, evacuation by plane was available.

During the first three weeks of this set-up, the number of patients admitted each day was not great, so that only

five trains were loaded during this period. The medical service had the majority of admissions, for the weather was cold and rainy, and the number of respiratory infections rose accordingly. The fighting which was going on was very important, but the number of troops involved was not large and the casualties were not heavy. Even so, there were admitted enough patients to keep everyone reasonably busy, particularly as the building was being repaired at the same time.

On October 10, Aachen was almost completely surrounded by units of the First Army and a demand for unconditional surrender of the city had been refused by the Germans, who immediately began counter-attacks to try to break the encirclement. On October 13, the American units entered the outskirts of Aachen, and after repeated artillery barrages, aerial bombardment and severe street fighting, the capture was completed on October 21. This city of 160,000 was the first large town taken in Germany, and it was almost completely destroyed by the shelling and bombing.

During the time of the aerial bombing of Aachen, the planes passed over Verviers, and as the weather was usually clear during some part of each morning or afternoon, the planes with the vapour trails stringing out for miles behind each flight made a beautiful picture. This was enhanced by the realization that this mighty show of air power was all Allied, and during the daylight hours, was entirely American. As these planes went in for their bombing runs, they were still visible, and the vapour trails were punctuated by the dots of anti-aircraft shells bursting. At times, the little black dots were so thick that it seemed impossible that any plane could fly through such a concentration of shells. Some of the planes were undoubtedly hit, but none were seen shot down. The number of planes going over on some of these raids rivaled that which were seen in England as D-Day approached. At times as many as 500 of the four-engine bombers were in view at one time, and the parade of planes would take an hour to fly over. At night the Royal Air Force bombers passed overhead, and as they were usually strung out for miles instead of being in close formation as the American bombers were, they took even longer to pass over. On two occasions, night fighters of the Luftwaffe shot down a British plane over Verviers. At both times the air raid alert was sounded and the chatter of machine gun fire was heard. One alert came in the middle of a movie and the theatre tent was emptied in a remarkably short time. Both of the planes which fell landed in the town.

Every night the flashes from the artillery could be seen on the horizon toward Aachen. Although the distance was



HOSPITAL AT VERVIERS AFTER BOMBING RAID
Note almost complete loss of window glass

over fifteen miles, the rumbling could be heard. With the amount of bombing and artillery which this city received, it was little wonder that there was so much damage. The Germans, realizing the importance of this objective, both materially and psychologically, were fighting back with all their power, and were willing to sacrifice men and material to make this city as costly as possible to the Americans. Once it had been taken, the outer defenses of the Siegfried Line had been breached, and the entering wedge for the Allies driven.

On October 22 the robot bombs started coming over, and the 77th again had the same experience as they had at Tunbridge Wells. While in southern England, the bombs which passed over the hospital were aimed at London. At Verviers, the bombs were presumably aimed for Liege and Brussels. By noting the map, it could be seen that these three cities lie in a straight line, so that the robot bombs could be launched for any of them and if the calculation of the amount of fuel was faulty, the bomb would still drop along important communications and supply lanes. The realization that these bombs were primarily intended to go beyond Verviers was little consolation, for many of them dropped short of their target, and quite a number landed in the town.

"Sweating out the buzz bombs" became a twenty-four hour task. A hill about two miles to the east was just a bit higher than the hill on which the school building had been placed, and although this provided a screen so that the bombs could not be seen until they were fairly close, the hill was not near enough to provide the least protection. The roar of the buzz bomb could usually be heard before it could be seen, and as the irregular roar came nearer and nearer, everyone stopped at their work and waited until the missile had passed over. The bombs traveled at such speed that the sound did not keep up and once the top of the crescendo had been reached, everyone breathed a sigh of relief, as that meant the bomb was well past the point directly overhead.

The litter-bearers from the 90th Quartermaster Battalion were ordered back to their organization, and a group of colored soldiers from a sanitary company, under the command of Capt. John Kozak and Lt. Alex Diner, were attached to the 77th. Carrying litters was undoubtedly the heaviest work to be done in all the various tasks necessary for the functioning of the hospital. At Verviers, this job was heavier than at any other place because of the steps. The ambulances frequently came in convoys, so that there might be fifty to a hundred patients to be carried into the receiving room from the ambulance, and then to the wards, some of the patients going to the third floor wards and many of them going to second floor wards. When an x-ray was needed or the patient was ready for operation, he again had to be carried to the first floor where these two departments were located. When the time came for evacuation, there would be about 270 of the 300 patients to be carried to the front entrance where the ambulances were loaded, which often meant going down three flights of steps and then the length of the building. Going up or down the steps, one end of the litter had to be held very low and the other very high so that the patient would not slip off. American soldiers are not small men, and the simple act of lifting a loaded litter required some strength, so that carrying the litter for any distance was hard, grueling work. In the long halls the litter bearers developed a

method of walking very rapidly and balancing the litter so that the patient was scarcely joggled, which was of importance when the patient had wounds. As some of the wards were later located outside the building, the patients had to be carried into the hospital through the blackout when operation was necessary. In spite of all these difficulties the litter bearers performed an exceptionally outstanding job, working at times twelve hours without rest.

As the rain continued and the weather became colder, it was obvious that the enlisted men were not going to be comfortable in the tents which had been set up. The field by now was very muddy and the trucks had cut deep ruts into the soil. Three school buildings nearer the center of town were taken over for the enlisted men and they moved



COURTYARD AT VERVIERS

into them in the latter part of October. Their mess tent was moved from the mud and set up in the courtyard of the hospital, where the large theater tent had been erected, and this served as the dining tent.

In the theater tent, movies were shown almost every night, to the enjoyment of both the patients and the personnel of the hospital. In addition, many of the hospital personnel brought their new Belgian friends, who seemed to enjoy the shows very much despite the fact that only a few of them could understand English. Several excellent pictures were seen at this time, including "Gaslight," "Mr. Winkle Goes to War," "Janie," and "A Guy Named Joe." The officers and nurses had a room next to their dining room which had been arranged for recreation. An opening was cut in the wall at one end of the room and an attractive bar installed where beer, wine, and soft drinks could be purchased. Some plaques showing the location of each stop made by the unit were painted and placed at either side of the bar, and a crest made by Lt. Col. Snyder was placed over the bar. This showed the Kansas Jayhawk, the five campaign stars the unit had earned at that time, and the five bars for overseas service. There were small figures representing the different departments of the hospital which included a small chaplain's cross, a microscope for the pharmacy and laboratory, a stethoscope for the medical service, and a saw for the surgical service. An oil painting of Constantine by Lt. Virginia McIntosh, a portrait of Col. Walker by one of the local Belgian artists, and a large crayon reproduction of an aerial view of the hospital when set up at Ste. Mere-Eglise completed the decorations. Comfortable chairs, tables and a piano made the room very at-

tractive. Books and magazines supplied by the Special Service Branch of the Army were kept on the shelves. With all these facilities, the room became a pleasant place to spend any leisure time. In addition to the usual social activities within the 77th, the Civil Affairs Detachment for Verviers, which was quartered only a few blocks away, invited the officers and nurses to a dance on October 28.

A group of three large school buildings about two blocks from the hospital were taken over by the American Army and converted into the Jayhawk Rest Camp where men from the First Army were sent for a few days' rest and recreation. They were allowed the freedom of the town and to do practically anything they wished. With so many soldiers in the town, Verviers was finally put on limits to the personnel of the 77th on October 29, and they were permitted to go down into the town where they had lived for nearly a month.

Verviers, a city of about 85,000, had been a textile center, especially in the weaving and washing of a fine grade of wool. Large amounts of crystal glassware were also



AERIAL VIEW OF THE CITY OF VERVIERS

manufactured in and around this town, and as in most Belgian towns, fine lace articles were made here. The town itself was quite old, although many of the stores and homes were of recent construction. The main part of the town lay in a valley, with the residential districts extending up into the surrounding hills. There were two main business districts, one at the foot of the hill where the hospital was located and another across a narrow river, the latter being the older section of town. Two fairly large department stores were open, the larger and better being the Grand Bazaar. Innumerable cafes were to be found along the streets, and there were several excellent pipe shops, in one of which pipes were manufactured. In a few of the cafes ice cream could be purchased, but this was banned by the army authorities because of the danger of contacting disease. One cafe had been thoroughly inspected and was approved for the selling of ice cream to the troops. There were a number of leather shops where pocketbooks and purses of good quality were available. There were also stores which handled only crystal, and these were probably visited more frequently than any other. Christmas was still some time away but the Grand Bazaar had already prepared several window displays in anticipation of the coming holiday. In one window was a large St. Nicholas who looked very life-like and nodded constantly from side

to side. In this store, in addition to the usual articles, one entire floor was devoted wholly to toys, with dolls, trains and games.

As Christmas approached, shopping tours became the order of the day when work permitted. Large quantities of crystal, lace and toys were sent home. Near Liege was the suburb of Val St. Lambert, the center of the crystal industry in Belgium. A number of visits were made to the factories in this area and glasses, goblets, decanters and vases brought back. The packing of all this fragile glassware occupied much of the time off duty.

The main difficulty with the majority of these purchases was the cost. Although the quality of the crystal was undoubtedly the best, the price of a single goblet or glass was two to three dollars, and the glassware appeared no better or prettier than that made by firms in the States and which sold for much less. The same high prices prevailed for most of the other desirable items, for the leather goods were very expensive and the inferior toys priced much higher than their worth. About the only things which were worth what was asked for them were the beautiful hand-made lace and the fine shotguns which could be purchased from the factory near Liege.

In the town square was a monument erected to the memory of a physician. Years ago, the city had been captured by enemy troops, and while under the rule of the oppressors, this man had continued to act as the leading voice in the underground opposition. For his activities, including the treatment of those who fought against the rulers, he was put to death. In gratitude for his work and sacrifice, the people of the town had this statue erected after their freedom had been restored, and it still stands as a reminder of this man who gave his life for the city. Another unique possession of the city was the song praising its beauties and virtues, which was played daily on the chimes of one of the churches.

One of the most famous stories of Verviers concerned a statue in one of the churches. During one of the plague epidemics of Europe the people of Verviers came to the church to pray for their safety. The following morning one of the statues, that of the Virgin Mary, was found to have changed. Before she had clasped the Infant Jesus in both arms, but now He was held in one arm while the other was raised, as though warding off some evil. Within a few days after this happened, there were no more new cases of the plague, and the town lost no more people to this dread disease. The story remains today that as long as the Virgin Mary continues to hold out Her arm to protect the Infant and the city, no harm will come to its inhabitants.

After a few visits, the newness of the town wore off, and early in November large numbers of patients were admitted, so that more time was required for work and less could be devoted to pleasure.

On November 2, one of the several acts of sabotage was committed at the hospital. The motor pool was located in an alley at the side of the hospital and here the unit vehicles and several thousand gallons of gasoline and kerosene were stored. In the evening just before dark a small fire was discovered near an open can of gasoline. This was extinguished by the guard. Two nights later the same thing occurred, but this time, as the guard was putting out the fire, a shot was fired at him. Despite a prompt search by the guards and later investigation by the counter-intelligence corps, the saboteurs were not apprehended. On sev-

eral occasions the electricity supplied from Liege was cut off and the wires were found to be cut at some point between Liege and Verviers. The control switch for an air alert siren placed on top of the building was located inside the school. This was found turned off several times when it had been on and in good working order earlier in the evening during the regular inspection by the guards. Such acts were to be expected, as Verviers was located so near the German border. In the main, the people of this city were pro-Allies, but there were many who were of German descent, and although most were anti-Nazi, there were certainly a considerable number who worked for the Germans. Sabotage in a unit such as a hospital was not a source of great concern, as there were rarely any attempts made by enemy agents to harm an organization of this nature.

During the 77th's stay at Verviers, a number of inspections were made. The inspecting officers included Lt. Gen. Lee, Commanding General of the Army Service Forces in the ETO; Brig. Gen. Plank, Commanding General of Advance Section Communications Zone; Col. Beasley, ADSEC Surgeon, and Maj. Swizler, Chief Nurse in Advance Section Communications Zone.

The awaited push for Duren and Julich on the First Army front began on November 3. In the Hurtgen Forest fierce fighting was going on and the village of Schmidt changed hands four times in the course of a week, for the troops which controlled this village had an important observation point over a wide area, including several of the dams of the upper parts of the Roer River. The weather remained cold and nearly every day there was rain. From these offensive battles and the counterattacks, there were a large number of casualties and for the first time an overwhelming proportion of the admissions to the hospital were patients with "trench foot." Although the hospital had prepared beds for about 1,000 patients, this was entirely inadequate. All the floor space in the hospital was therefore utilized, the patients being left on the litters, as most of them remained only overnight and were evacuated the day following admission. The litters were as comfortable as the cots, but because they were so low care of the patients was more difficult. The hallway in the front basement was set up as a litter ward. The long hallway by the x-ray department, and several small rooms and a balcony near the dental clinic were utilized in a similar manner. Patients on litters were placed in each of the orthopedic wards, and also in the medical wards, as there was adequate space in the center of the wards to place two long lines of litters side by side. On the days when the admissions were exceptionally numerous, the Chapel and Red Cross rooms were used, and on one occasion, the officers' and nurses' recreation room was filled with patients. Triangular frames covered with cloth were built and placed between the heads of each litter to reduce spread of respiratory infections.

The problem of "trench foot" became more and more acute as the winter progressed, and more men were being hospitalized for this condition alone than for all other causes combined. At the front the men were frequently pinned down for long periods by enemy fire and had to remain in their foxholes as long as forty-eight hours without moving about. With their feet wet, and no opportunity to change socks and shoes, and with the forced immobilization and lack of exercise, tissue changes occurred much

like those seen after frost bite or prolonged immersion in cold water. The men first noted numbness of the toes and feet, and when the first opportunity came for them to remove their shoes, their feet swelled so rapidly that they were unable to replace their shoes. With the swelling the feet became increasingly painful.

In the group with the least tissue damage the feet appeared normal, but the men complained of burning of the feet and toes and loss of sensation. In the next stage slight swelling of the feet could be seen. In the more severely damaged there followed the various color changes in the skin. This began with a slight redness and progressed through a deep, mottled red to purple and on to black, indicating local death of the tissues. In the early stages almost regardless of the degree of damage, there was little or no pain as long as the patient did not attempt to walk, but later the pain and burning of the feet was severe. The men soon learned that their feet were much more comfortable if they were left uncovered. From the previous studies made in Italy and Alaska, there was little active treatment which could be done that would improve the condition of the tissues. Absolute rest, moderate warmth, and cleanliness of the feet were the three essential factors of the treatment used. If blisters had formed or there was evidence of gangrene, the men were given a booster injection of tetanus toxoid and a course of sulfadiazine. When the damage was most severe, intra-muscular penicillin was also given.

The fact that so few of the patients were able to walk created an additional problem in the feeding and nursing care. At the same time that all these patients with "trench foot" were being admitted, there were the usual patients with injuries, wounds and illnesses coming in.

The mess department in particular was very busy, and had more meals to serve here than at any other location. The hospital personnel numbered about 400, the civilian employees about 200, the litter company about 100, and the patients varied from 400 to 1,400. These difficulties were added to by the fact that there was no accurate means by which an estimate might be made of the number of meals to be served each day, for if two or three trains were sent out during the day, and only a few admissions were made during the night, the hospital census would drop sharply. And, if evacuation was held up and admissions continued, the hospital census rose very rapidly.

The large influx of patients far exceeded the normal capacity of the hospital, and as stated previously, all available floor space was utilized. At the side of the building two ward tents were pitched for German patients, and later four more ward tents were erected on a tennis court in the school garden. Although the capacity of the hospital was supposed to be 750 patients, on one occasion 1451 patients were in the hospital. Besides the added strain on the mess department, the other departments, such as supply and laundry, were equally hard pressed.

The severe fighting all along the front continued. In the fifty square miles of the Hurtgen Forest, the 4th and 28th Infantry Divisions were advancing only by yards at terrific costs. The enemy had zeroed in all the conceivable targets, and tree bursts in the forest wounded hundreds. The steep hills, mines, barbed wire barricades, thick woods, poor visibility, and freezing wet weather made this some of the toughest fighting of the war. Nearly two months were required to clear the Hurtgen Forest, and the 1st, 4th, 9th, 28th and 104th Infantry Divisions and the 5th Ar-

mored Division were necessary to perform the task. Casualties poured into the hospital.

On November 7 the re-election of President Roosevelt was announced, and was more celebrated by the Belgians than the Americans, for the latter were busy fighting a war. Some idea, however, of the international popularity of our President was gained.

November 11 brought Armistice Day, the third which the 77th had spent overseas, but the first of the three which they had spent on land. On Armistice Day, 1942, the 77th was off the coast of Africa ready to land, and on Armistice Day, 1943, they were aboard the *John Erricson* on the re-



TURKEYS FOR THE
THANKSGIVING DINNER

KITCHEN AT VERRIERS

turn trip to England from Sicily. Armistice Day, 1944, brought only more buzz bombs, more "trench foot," more casualties, more work.

Even with the hard work, there were the usual incidents in a lighter vein. Miss Eisenstadt, one of the Red Cross workers, was making her rounds on Ward 100 when she came to a rather dark skinned patient. Noting his medical record, she asked, "How did you ever get shot with two arrows?" To which the full-blooded Indian replied with righteous indignation, "That's my name, not my injury!"

Thanksgiving Day was observed only with the church services and the traditional dinner. Dozens of turkeys were drawn in the ration, and these were baked and served with all the dishes which go to make up the typical American Thanksgiving dinner. There were dressing, asparagus, mashed potatoes, giblet gravy, cranberry sauce, rolls, butter, coffee, cake, candy and nuts. Light and dark meat, seconds on everything—and all the patients and hospital personnel were ready for a post-prandial nap after such a feast. The cooks and their helpers outdid themselves, and well deserved all the praise they received.

Just after Thanksgiving Day several robot bombs hit in the railyards in Liege and as a result the hospital trains could not get through. For several days there was no evacuation until the trains could be re-routed on another line. Early in December, the trains once more began their trips, and evacuation went on rapidly.

The smoothly functioning system was just part of the routine, but in retrospect contrasted sharply to the chaotic manner of evacuation at Tidworth in England and Oran in Africa when the hospital was still green and trying to func-

tion "by the book." The problem of loading three trains with over 900 patients in one day was now carried out with less confusion than the return to duty of one ambulance load of patients had been at Frenchay. The evacuation ward had been abolished after Oran, and later during the African campaign, the use of evacuation slips had been originated. Now the evacuation officer could tell at a glance how many patients were ready for transfer or duty, how many could walk and how many had to go on litters, how many were seriously wounded and how many were only slightly ill. The evacuation slips went through the proper channels quickly and methodically. Even reclothing of the patients was carried out, and patients were no longer sent out clothed only in a blanket as had been done at Oran.

Evacuation lists were made up, cut and delivered to the wards well in advance of the time for evacuation. The patients were ready when the time came, with proper clothing, medical records securely fastened to their dog tag chains and x-rays in their hands. The litter bearers, organized into groups and with duplicate evacuation lists, quickly took all the patients from each ward and loaded the ambulances. Another group of litter bearers brought all the walking patients to the appointed place at the exact time



DINING ROOM AT VERRIERS

for loading. Checks were made at so many points that it was practically impossible to miss a patient or to evacuate the wrong one.

The railroad station was about a mile from the hospital across the town, but even with this distance to travel in the shuttle, a train could be completely loaded in less than an hour and a half. The excellence of this method of evacuation did not go unnoticed by higher officials, and a number of evacuation officers from other hospitals were sent to learn the system used by the 77th.

In military medicine, for units from the battalion surgeon back to and including evacuation hospitals, one of the few detrimental factors in determining the standard of medical care was the inability of the doctor to follow up his patients. Once he had administered his part of the treatment during the time the patient traversed the chain of evacuation, the doctor usually lost all contact with the patient and had no knowledge of his subsequent progress. The Army recognized this factor, but by the very nature of military medicine there was very little which could be done. To obtain the very best medical care, each soldier

had to be evacuated to the large, well-equipped general hospitals in the rear, and on his way back from the front to these rear echelon units, constant expert medical attention was necessary; even though he was held by some medical units for only a few hours, the patient could not be neglected. Follow up cards were provided, which the field doctor might place in the medical record for the general hospital physician to fill out and return at the proper time; but these were frequently lost, not filled out, or never returned, and were not satisfactory, for only a small percentage were ever received by the field doctors. In another effort to overcome the lack of follow up, in the area of the 77th, surgical teams were sent back from the Army units to the 77th and remained for a period of twenty-four hours, observing the condition of the patients on arrival and the methods in which they were handled.

After a long period of only small amounts of mail, in the last part of November large quantities of mail arrived from the States. This was followed by letters sent early in November, and then the first large shipment of Christmas packages. The latter were especially welcome, and many impromptu parties resulted, as the men who had received packages shared them with those who had none. The first phase of an orgy of fruit cake eating was entered. Several received small quantities of bourbon, and the means used by the sender to conceal this rare drink were at times too clever, confusing even the recipient. One officer received a quart jar of cherries, which he said his wife knew he disliked. After giving them to a friend, they were both surprised to find that the cherries were simply to conceal the bourbon which the jar contained. Another man received a box of chocolate candy, which he promptly gave away to have it returned later because only the top layer was chocolate candy, the remaining layers containing a number of "one-shot" bottles of bourbon.

During the few quiet days about this time, when the number of patients coming in had diminished, many of the nurses went to the Quartermaster Sales Store at Eupen where they purchased the new battle dress which had been authorized for nurses. This uniform was the most practical of the long series of changing styles which the nurses had been issued and had purchased. Green blouse and pink skirt, then the all-green uniform, tailor-made green slacks, two-piece fatigue uniforms for duty wear, seersucker dresses and green dresses had all been issued. About the same time a practical, warm, well-fitting overcoat was issued. The nurses' bedrolls were large, but for good reason; the variety of uniforms which had been authorized during their three years in the Army was more than could be carried comfortably.

On December 16th the Battle of the Bulge began. During the day the robot bombs came over in increasing numbers until late in the afternoon there were actually ten within sight at the same time. That evening during the show there was an air raid alert and bombs were dropped on the town. None of the hospital personnel suspected what was going on at the front, and the possibility of a major German offensive had occurred to few. Early the following morning two patients were brought in and through them news of the offensive was learned. The first patient had a contusion about the eye and, when asked by the ward officer how this occurred, stated that he had been fighting a German paratrooper. A few minutes later a lieutenant was

admitted because of a bullet wound through the abdomen. On being questioned as to how this had happened, he said he had been shot by a German paratrooper. By this time the hospital staff realized that something was going on at the front, and this was further confirmed when they found out that the troops at the Jayhawk Rest Center had been alerted about midnight and left for the front within an hour.

Germany's general staff had realized that the war of attrition at the Siegfried Line had no future for them, for their supplies and replacements were being chewed up without anything to show for it, morale was ebbing, and the Line was beginning to crack. Germany's time was getting short, but Field Marshal von Rundstedt had a plan and two panzer armies to carry it out. This was to break through the lightly held southern part of the First Army front and push to Liege and then on to Brussels and Antwerp on the north, and toward Namur on the south, breaking through between Monschau and Trier. After an intense three-hour artillery barrage, eighteen German divisions started the push. Penetrating the Belgian-Luxembourg frontiers at three places, the SS troops bent back the flank of the 99th Infantry Division into the Bucholz Forest, and smashed straight through the thinly held sector of the 28th Infantry Division and around the 10th Infantry Division. It was beautiful weather for the Germans, soupy fog, thick clouds, and zero visibility kept the Allied planes grounded. As the offensive progressed, the Germans tried desperately to break through the Butgenbach hinge on the north so they could rush on to Liege. The latter was the heart of the Allied supply center and Rundstedt banked heavily on capturing supplies of food and fuel as his troops advanced. But the 2nd Infantry Division held at Butgenbach, so the enemy had to keep pushing westward, probing everywhere on the northern shoulder for weak spots. Malmedy, Stavelot and Stoumont, all lying in a row southeast of Liege, was each an entrance. But at each point any Allied forces available were thrown in to hold at all cost. Clerks, cooks, MP's, Belgians, bakers, mechanics held against a highly mechanized German army of picked troops until reinforcements could be brought up. Soon a stone wall backed by a continuous stream of reinforcements was formed and the repeated enemy attacks bogged down. Meanwhile other panzer units were driving straight westward through northern Luxembourg and crossing into Belgium for a penetration of twenty miles to a point seven miles south of Bastogne. This was the broadest, deepest penetration. The other was a narrow front north of St. Vith. The original German drive in this St. Vith sector had been divided by the stubborn resistance of the 7th Armored Division, part of the 9th Armored Division, and remnants of the 28th and 106th Infantry Divisions. Until the Germans could clear the St. Vith sector, they had to reroute their supply columns, using precious time and fuel. The desperate Nazis then hit in the other sectors, the Elsenborn Ridge at the northern hinge and the Ambleve River area. Three powerful attacks on Elsenborn were beaten back by the 1st Infantry Division on December 21. When the Germans attempted to cross the Ambleve, the XVIII Airborne Corps stopped them and counterattacked, to take Stoumont with the 3rd Armored Division and the 30th Infantry Division. Another German spearhead toward the Meuse was blunted by the 82nd Airborne Division, which made contact with the 30th Infantry Division at Stoumont. Unable to punch

through to Liege, the Germans were raining V-bombs on the city by the hundreds.

The first phase of the offensive ended December 22, and despite the penetration of 50 miles of the Allied lines at some points, the Nazis had been unable to break through to the north to capture the vitally needed supply dumps. Inside Bastogne, which was now surrounded, the 101st Airborne Division with parts of the 9th and 10th Armored Divisions and several smaller units held out, having sent the one word reply "Nuts" to the German surrender ultimatum. Allied units were being redeployed rapidly. The British had moved troops to defend the Meuse River line. From the Ninth Army, the 2nd and 7th Armored Divisions, and the 30th, 83rd, and 84th Infantry Divisions had been moved into the northern flank. Third Army on the south was ordered to switch to this sector from the Saar front, and the 4th Armored Division, and the 26th and 80th Infantry Divisions were sent to relieve Bastogne. German air support was heavier than it had been at any time since the invasion with their bombers coming out mostly at night. First Army troops had withdrawn from the St. Vith area, and in the Marche-Hotton area the 84th Infantry Division beat off repeated attacks. The 2nd Armored Division was around Borsu, the 75th Infantry Division at Borlon, the 3rd Armored Division and the 39th Infantry Division at La Gleize. The 82nd Airborne Division pulled back to a new defensive line in the Manhay area where the 7th Armored Division was fighting fiercely. On December 26 the Germans were fifteen miles from Namur and within sight of the Meuse River.

Thinking the movement of the 82nd Airborne Division signalled a major withdrawal, the Germans expected only light resistance at the Manhay and Marche road junctions, and in a fierce night attack succeeded in taking Manhay, but lost it again the following afternoon when the 7th Armored Division counterattacked. At Marche the 84th Infantry Division held. On December 27 the Nazis made another effort to take Elsenborn, but this too was broken up.

Unable to break out of the bulge, either north or south, the two panzer armies had little room to maneuver. When the 2nd Armored Division met the 2nd Panzer Division and ripped it to pieces, the first shrinkage of the bulge began. Bastogne was relieved, the tip of the offensive was stopped, and the northern and southern flanks were now contained. The slow, bitter fighting to clear the last German out of the bulge began.

During the Battle of the Bulge, the personnel of the hospital worked harder than at any time other than the early missions on Normandy. In addition to the large number of patients admitted, the hospital was harassed continually by the bombing, strafing, shelling, and the V-weapons which landed all about. During the afternoon of December 17, the fog and clouds cleared for a while and dog-fights were seen over the hospital. The robot bombs came over at fifteen minute intervals, with scarcely a pause during the day or night. One of these bombs hit the 76th General Hospital in Liege and within a few hours the news had reached the 77th. This did not add to the sense of security of the hospital personnel. In the afternoon the patients began coming in and their stories were repeatedly that of retreat, positions overrun, confusions, huge losses of men and material, a temporary stand, and then further withdrawal. There was no "strategic withdrawal" as far as

these men were concerned, the powerful German forces were more than they could cope with and they had been forced to pull out. Repeatedly, stories of being cut off and slipping back through the lines were heard. The men were not discouraged; for the first time in weeks a gradual rise in their tempers was noted, and as in every other campaign when the fighting became the hardest there were fewer and fewer patients admitted with minor complaints and the universal question was, "How soon can I get out of here and back to the front?"

During the enemy advance, several of the forward hospitals were forced to withdraw and fortunately none of the personnel was lost. The 67th Evacuation Hospital had to pull out of their advanced position and went into bivouac near Liege. Capt. Ashley, who only a short time before had transferred from the 77th to the 3rd Auxiliary Surgical Group, told of his escape. His team had been attached to a field hospital located in a forward area. The hospital and equipment had been moved back and only a few of the personnel remained. As they waited for orders, they heard the sound of artillery coming closer and closer, and finally small arms fire could be heard. An infantry colonel, returning from the front, stopped long enough to ask the remaining hospital personnel what they were waiting for, as the Germans were less than two miles away. The only vehicle left was the water truck, so some thirty odd officers and men climbed on and made a hasty exit.

The night of December 17 there were three air raids with a number of bombs dropped in Verviers. The main target seemed to be Liege, and on the way back, some of the German planes invariably dropped a few bombs and strafed Verviers. That night a huge gasoline dump near Liege was hit, and the flames could be seen from the hospital.

The patients began coming in late in the afternoon and all during the evening were admitted until the hospital was filled and a large operative backlog had developed. Some of the operating personnel began working eighteen hours daily and by this means the backlog was overcome. Again the medical service was called upon to lend officers to the surgical service where they served in the shock section and as anesthetists. Being in almost the exact center of the northern flank of the Bulge, the 77th Evac and the 9th Field Hospitals were receiving nearly all the casualties from the northern flank. Because of limited capacity, the 9th Field was unable to take a very large number of patients, and for a period of nearly a week the bulk of the work fell to the 77th. Once again there was a constant stream of patients to the operating room as the eight operating tables and two fracture tables were kept occupied night and day.

December 18 was a repetition of the previous day and night. Again there were only a few patients admitted during the early part of the day, but late in the afternoon and early evening, they were admitted in almost a continuous stream. It became obvious that additional help would be needed and several attached personnel were received from hospitals which were in bivouac or were not busy. These included the following: from the 32nd General Hospital, Captains Robert L. Ammon, Robert W. Oliphant, William F. Hanning and William P. Montanne; 1st Lieutenant Thaddeus P. Balum; 2nd Lieutenants Juanita Gambill, Helen Hoover, Josephine Kennedy, Betty L. Lehman, Theresa Palko, Mildred Perkins, Louene Robbins, Helen

Ross and Helen M. Wentland; from the 12th Field Hospital: Capt. Claudia M. Draper, 2nd Lieutenants Irene L. Ajeic, Mary J. Maegerlien, Eva Whittier, Nola A. Thompson, Helen M. Horvath, Sevilla M. Durkop, Gladys E. Detwiler, Mary E. Schreiber, Mary E. Andrew, Virginia L. Towers and Isle Rose Williams; from the 67th Evacuation Hospital: Capt. Warren C. Hastings; 13 enlisted men from the 25th General Hospital and 27 enlisted men from the 32nd General Hospital.

Verviers had become an important road junction, a bottleneck through which thousands of American and British troops were being funneled into the northern flank. The Germans were quick to appreciate this fact. From the maps it was obvious that there must be a large volume of traffic through Verviers if the central part of the northern shoulder of the Bulge was to be reinforced rapidly. To the personnel stationed in the town, this was shown in the constant stream of trucks, tanks and guns which went through; the roar of the engines and the clatter of the tank treads were almost constant. Such a target was too valuable to miss, and the enemy wasted little time in carrying out the expected attacks. On the night of December 19, the enemy planes came over and dropped flares which lit up the entire town as though it were day. Having carefully picked their targets, they began their bombing. This was perhaps the heaviest raid which the town experienced during the entire Battle of the Bulge. The bombs dropped into the town and all about the hospital, but there were none close enough to cause any damage to the hospital. However, this fact was of little consolation during the time of the bombing, as there was no way of knowing whether the bombs were going to land nearby or far away. The patients who could be moved were all taken to the air raid shelter. All the personnel who were not needed were also sent there. The height of the raid caught three operating teams at work on rather difficult cases, and it was out of the question to stop.

During this particular night one of the patients was being questioned concerning the manner in which he was injured and the story which he told later appeared in the papers under the heading of *The Malmedy Massacre*. It was truly an inhuman demonstration of the depths to which the frantic enemy had sunk. The patient stated that he had been captured early that day, along with about 140 other American soldiers, including a number of medical corpsmen. They had been herded into an open field, and when it was night, several enemy tanks lined up along the road bordering the field. The men were forced into a tightly packed group, and suddenly the machine guns from all the tanks began firing on them. The night was soon filled with the moans of the dying, but still the intermittent chatter of the machine guns continued. Finally these stopped, and the officers and men of the German troops walked among the group of fallen men. If one of the prisoners moved or groaned, he was summarily shot through the head. The patient questioned had been only slightly wounded, and although desperately frightened, he lay quietly and made no sound. One of the men came close to him, but passed on after a quick inspection. The patient dared not move, and scarcely breathed for fear he would be discovered. After an interminable time the tanks finally turned off their lights and went on down the road. Only a few men were left to guard the mass of bodies. As it was now completely dark, the patient finally moved slowly to the edge

of the group and then into the woods where he at last stood up. He was soon joined by two or three others who could walk, and they set out for their own lines through the darkness. After what seemed like hours, they came upon some of the American troops, and were soon back in the relative safety of the hospital. This story was quickly communicated to the intelligence section in the town and within a matter of minutes their officers were at the hospital to question the survivors in detail. From the facts which they learned, they were able to piece together enough details to identify the German unit which had carried out this horrible affair.

During this time and later, numerous stories were told of narrow escapes, foolhardy bravery and desperate chances. The paratroopers were especially noted for their fighting qualities, although not a man was seen who had not done his best. One paratrooper told of his manner of injury. He was a bozooka-man, and had been firing on a Tiger tank. As he stepped out into the road to get a better field of fire, the 88 mm. gun of the tank fired. The shell hit about three feet in front of the man and exploded. The depth of penetration into the earth was just sufficient to decelerate the shell fragments to the point where the patient received no serious injury, although there were dozens of tiny shell fragment wounds over the front of his body and legs. Another described how he had got his *second* Tiger tank. The enemy tanks were making a concentrated attack and were on the point of breaking through. Although the paratrooper had nothing but his rifle and a liberal supply of hand grenades, he had no hesitancy in attacking the heavily armored tank. He finally got close enough to throw one grenade with excellent accuracy, crippling the tank by injuring one of the treads. The tank was soon finished off with bazooka fire as more of the paratroopers came up. A third paratrooper told of retaking an important village. He stated that the enemy had captured the village the day before and during the night had dug in with every gun at their disposal. When the order to attack came late in the afternoon, the men found themselves facing a solid wall of shell fire from rifles, machine guns, 88's, and "screaming meemies." The latter, with their terrifying sound, seemed to be the most dreaded. Despite such defense, the men edged forward inch by inch and by nightfall had retaken the village. As the patient said, "Seemed like the air was packed with shells, but we got there," and that was what counted to him.

These stories were just a minutiae of the thousands of acts of bravery and sacrifice which these fighting men were making all along the line. They were told with no bragging, and yet without reluctance; simply a matter-of-fact statement as to what happened. If each man could have his personal story written of this trying time, many volumes could be filled, all repeating endlessly acts of bravery far above the call of duty. The cooks and clerks of one company who found two anti-aircraft guns, set up a road block and protected a large area by stopping a deep thrust by an enemy tank column were not fighting for pay, or medals, or any definable thing; but simply exemplified the true fighting spirit of the American soldier when the going gets tough.

For the people of the 77th, who had not seen home in so long, a nostalgic note was introduced when some of the patients said that they had left the States only the month before. Someone so recently from home was treated with

a bit of deference, for it was said that the States could still be smelled on him. In this group there was one sergeant who was quite cheerful about his wound, although it was a shell fragment wound of the leg with fracture. He had left the States a month before, had been in the front lines a little over one day, and had received a wound severe enough to make evacuation to the States necessary. He felt that the twenty-four hours of the front-line hell he had been through was enough to last him a life time, and thought himself very lucky to get out of it with the injury he had.

December 20 brought more patients, more buzz-bombs, and more work. During that night a new type of attack was used by the enemy. Shortly after midnight explosions occurred near the hospital, spaced at first about fifteen minutes apart and sounding much like the familiar 90 mm. anti-aircraft gun. Further details were soon learned about these shells when the guard reported. Far off to the southeast a flash could be seen. Exactly ten seconds later the shell burst would come. These were air bursts, and after each one, shell fragments poured down, some being of considerable size. Although it seemed that the enemy could not be aiming at the hospital from such a distance, the majority of the shells burst within a radius of three hundred yards of the building. The personnel in the hospital were not concerned, as the roof offered adequate protection, and the guards felt that their steel helmets would protect them. After a while the firing slowed down, but soon started again, coming regularly at five minute intervals, and alternately bursting on one and then the other side of the hospital. About four-thirty in the morning one of the shells exploded lower and closer to the hospital. Several windows were broken, but no other damage was done. Lt. Mae Ramsey, T/5 David E. Gibson and T/5 James A. Burkett were working in the tents outside the hospital, and when the shell splinters began raining through the canvas, they moved the patients into the air raid shelter in the building. This was accomplished without injury to either patients or hospital personnel although the following morning one fairly large sized shell splinter was found in Lt. Ramsey's sweater pocket.

Everyone had just settled down when, after a few more shells, the hospital was hit. The shell had struck the south corner of the building. Immediately those who were up felt intense anxiety for the nurses who were sleeping on the fourth floor near the place the shell had hit. Within a matter of seconds several of the officers and men were on the way to this corner of the building. The bathroom at the corner of the building had been almost completely demolished. The two outer walls and the roof were blown in and the floor was a mass of plaster and other debris. Unfortunately, a Red Cross worker, Miss Ann Kathleen Cullen, who was a patient, was in the bathroom at the time the shell hit, and she was found under the wreckage. Her injuries were exceedingly severe, and within five minutes of the time the shell hit she had been dug out of the wreckage, placed on a stretcher, taken to the operating room and was receiving plasma and blood. In spite of the prompt treatment, the patient expired about an hour later.

Several narrow escapes occurred when the shell hit. Most of the nurses were asleep, or trying to sleep, in their quarters which were adjacent to the corner of the building which was hit. Lt. Ann Kniubas was cut by flying glass, but the remainder of the nurses escaped injury. Pfc. William Thompson was also cut by glass. Maj. Wendell A.

Grosjean and Capt. William I. Gautschi, both patients in the hospital, had been leaning out a third story window just as the shell hit and both were blown back into the room.



SHELL STRUCK THIS CORNER OF THE BUILDING

Maj. Grosjean escaped injury, but Capt. Gautschi was bruised in the fall.

The damage to the building was considerable in the one area hit. There was, however, little hospital equipment destroyed. The bathroom on the corner of the fourth floor was completely demolished. Plaster dirt, and broken glass cluttered the nurses' rooms. The stairway in this corner was littered with fallen debris down to the basement floor, and several windows which had only recently been replaced



ONE OF THE NURSES' DAMAGED ROOMS

were again knocked out. The laboratory and pharmacy section, for the second time, received the major part of the damage. One medical ward had to be closed for a short time for repairs. An immediate change of the quarters for the nurses was made, and they were moved to the basement in the rooms which had been occupied by the Red Cross and the Chapel. The latter were given temporary quarters in the air raid shelter. An increase in church attendance, and an increased use of the recreational facilities was obvious.

Tension in the hospital increased noticeably after the shell hit. The realization that the Geneva Convention was of no protection during the night, and of only moderate protection during the day brought a feeling that the front

was gradually drawing closer. Confirmation of this came when a patient admitted next day was asked where he was injured and he replied just over that hill there, indicating a hill only a few miles away. As the nearest-to-true-news which could be obtained came from the patients, there were few who doubted him.



BATHROOM WRECKAGE

December 21, 22 and 23 were more of the same. A continuous stream of patients during the afternoon and night, gradually lessening early in the morning and then regaining momentum again during the afternoon was sufficient to keep all of the hospital personnel fully occupied. Buzz bombs, rumors and patients passed over, about, and through the hospital in a never-ending stream.

Returning to their barracks one morning after working all night, T/5 David E. Gibson, T/5 Sam E. Parrish, T/5 Linwood V. Pruett, T/5 Chester N. Brown, T/4 Lester Smolar, T/5 Kenneth J. Kohlwaies, and T/5 Lacy M. Pittman decided to sleep in the air raid shelter because of the buzz bombs and jet planes which had been coming over. It was fortunate that they made this change on this particular day, for about ten o'clock a jet plane dropped a bomb close by and the blast blew in the roof of the barracks. Some of these men would surely have been injured if they had been in the barracks.

Just at this time, when every person was needed, a number of the personnel were lost to the unit through hospitalization and transfer. T/Sgt. James L. Sale and T/3 Robert J. Gerlach were hospitalized and evacuated to general hospitals. T/5 Harold W. Rasmussen, Pfc. Louis Scaturro and Pfc. Harold Martin were transferred to the 15th General Hospital. The following men were transferred to infantry replacement depots: Pvt. Eugene Dubeau, Pvt. Ashby Hedger, Pfc. Carl Jones, Pfc. Broadway Jones, Pvt. J. S. Crean, T/5 Orville Crawford, Pfc. George S. Shaw, Pfc. Raymond Pead, Pfc. Gerald E. Gevock, Pvt. Nomer D. Seitz, Pvt. Lonnie F. Gales, and Pvt. Emith G. Kerns. These transfers were the result of orders from higher headquarters whereby men who were physically fit would be sent from all non-combatant units to replacement depots where they would receive a short course of training and then be placed in combat units. While the order was understandable in its necessity, there was much regret expressed in seeing these men leave. Some of them had been with the unit since it had first formed.

On December 24 the sun was out bright and clear for the first time since the start of the Battle of the Ardennes. The Allied air forces were ready for such a break in the weather and that day there were hundreds of planes in the air. Dog fights took place over Verviers, and a number of German planes were shot down.

Sgt. Joe Early described later the appearance of the air formations during this particular afternoon. "Our bombers and fighters were out in great strength, and from the hospital we could see the white phosphorous rockets towering skyward which marked our front lines. As we watched the planes pass overhead in a southeasterly direction, we knew they were not alone up there as we could see the vapor trails of enemy interceptors trying desperately to break up the formations. Action was starting now and we could hear the machine gun fire above the roar of the bombers. Several planes were seen to burst into flames and plunge downward leaving a trail of black smoke. A minute later a Thunderbolt fighter shot across above the town hot on the trail of an Me 109. Machine guns were still barking and as I looked directly above the hospital, I saw a plane plunge in a sickening, screaming dive. It came closer and closer, upside down and totally out of control. A split second later it burst into flames among the dwellings on the opposite side of the valley."

It was at this time that the hospital received a number of enemy patients who were dressed in GI clothing. They had been dropped by parachute behind the Allied lines, and only after several days were the military police successful in capturing all of them. These men were obviously material for the firing squad, but as they had been injured, it was necessary to treat their injuries while they were awaiting a fair trial. The enemy had gone to most intense measures to train these men in the most minute details of their jobs. As might be expected, it was impossible for them to have covered every possible situation. They were all dressed in the regulation clothing issued to the American soldiers. They carried AGO identification cards and dog tags. They all spoke excellent English, and to the average observer, they were as GI as any soldier that existed. A few well chosen questions proved the undoing of most of them. "Who won the World's Series? Where is Hagerstown?" Few of them knew the General Orders, which every American soldier learned and relearned from the time of his induction.

As many of the spies had been dropped around Verviers, there was a sudden tightening of the security measures in this town. Some of the men, and notably Sgt. Oscar E. Nelson, learned this the hard way. Sgt. Nelson was returning to the enlisted men's billet later than usual one evening from the hospital and decided to take a short cut. After about a half block, he was suddenly halted by two very business-like Yanks, both aiming rifles at his chest. On being asked for the password, which he did not know, he was marched at rifle point into the command post where the officer in charge took over the questioning. His identification tag and card were of some help, and after naming the principal hotels in his home town and answering several similar questions, the officer was partially convinced. Only after a telephone call to the hospital confirmed the fact that a Sgt. Oscar E. Nelson was on the roll did the officer release Sgt. Nelson. He learned that the night before two spies dressed in GI clothing were picked up at exactly the same spot where he had been apprehended.

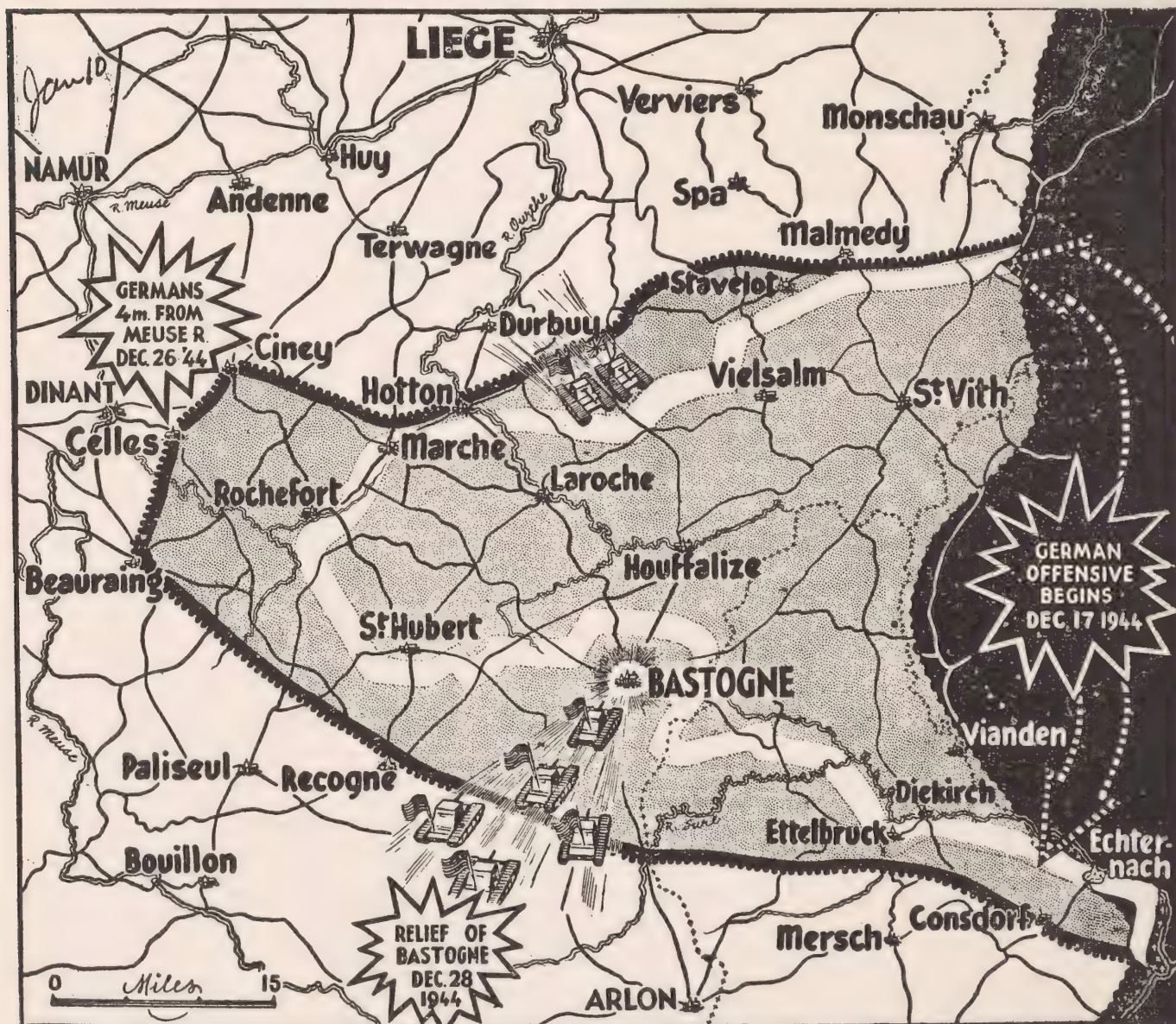
After the Battle of the Ardennes had started, the town had changed overnight. Instead of a joyous liberated population, with stores and cafes open and crowds on the streets, it suddenly became a deserted city. Many of the

Belgians left the town and went farther to the west, for their underground activities had become well known and their capture by the Germans would have meant certain death. Those who remained stayed indoors most of the time. Whereas the people before smiled and waved to the soldiers, now they scarcely looked at them. Their trust in the liberators was shaken, their uncertainty returned, and the advancing German columns brought back thoughts of the days of the occupation after they had had such a small taste of their liberty again.

The German propaganda broadcasts played on this very factor, and on occasions the town of Verviers was mentioned as being scheduled for extinction by the German Air Force. The enemy had become exceedingly clever at cutting out the BBC broadcasts at the proper moment and substituting programs of their own choosing. This was particularly and easily recognized in the news broadcasts. With split second timing, as the news broadcast

began, the powerful German station cut in. The announcer, usually a woman, always spoke excellent English. Except for a cunning twist here and there, the news was broadcast exactly as it had come from England on the previous news program. While the troops usually recognized it for what it was, the enemy succeeded in introducing a small element of doubt in the minds of many, and convincing those who were more gullible.

One of the most disturbing factors during this time were the early morning artillery barrages. Every morning about five o'clock, the dull rumble of artillery could be heard to the east. Much time was spent in speculation as to whether the guns were shooting toward or away from the town, and equally as much time spent in trying to guess whether the guns were nearer or farther than they had been on the previous morning. As far as the record goes, neither point was ever settled definitely, which may have been just as well, for the discomfort of the uncertainty



This is how the Belgian Bulge has shrunk from its maximum (black line) to its approximate present size (white border).

Stars and Stripes Map by Baird
Jan. 10, 1945

was probably better than knowing for certain that the guns were closer and were shooting toward the west.

Christmas Day, 1944, will probably be forever the most unpleasant Christmas in the lifetime of thousands of soldiers. The personnel and patients of the 77th were no exception. Ironically, the day began with an episode just about as opposite to peace and good will as possible when the hospital was strafed as midnight Mass was being held in the theatre tent. Fortunately no one was injured or the day would have been more unhappy than it was.



CHRISTMAS DECORATIONS ON ONE OF THE MEDICAL WARDS

The Red Cross workers and the nurses had made heroic efforts to instill some of the Christmas spirit into the hospital appearance. Every ward had a small tree decorated with bits of cotton and various colored bits of paper. The Red Cross had somehow managed to secure a quantity of paper bells, streamers, and similar decorations, and these were strung about the hospital. The attempt was well appreciated, but only served to heighten the homesickness. Individually wrapped Christmas boxes were given to each patient by the Red Cross. These contained candy, booklets, and various toilet articles. The Christmas dinner was a real achievement and a tribute to the fine work of the cooks and their helpers. There was plenty of turkey, dressing, mashed potatoes, gravy, carrot strips, brownies, cookies, fresh grapes and apples.

During the day a backlog of German prisoner of war patients was cleaned up. The operations were for the most part on old wounds which had become badly infected, as the Germans had made little or no provision for the evacuation and care of their wounded and it was only after these men had been captured that proper care could be given. The treatment of these wounds, while obviously necessary, was not a pleasant task, and seemed a particularly bitter one on such a day.

Again the weather was crystal clear, and the planes were out in great force. The enemy frequently attempted and successfully made sneak raids, with only one or a few planes. Therefore, while the sight of American bombers and fighters going over was a great consolation, the area was not without some danger. For the following few days the weather was clear for some part of each day. These raids by the enemy made frequent trips to the air raid shelter necessary. At night the enemy dared come out with even more frequency and in greater force.

At the barracks where the enlisted men lived this caused the men to spend a number of uncomfortable nights in the air raid shelter under the building. This shelter was also used by the civilians in the vicinity, and the crowding of so many people into such a small space produced a small scale replica of the Black Hole of Calcutta. In the shelter the Belgian police maintained order and saw to it that they were not too dangerously overcrowded. In the early evening the civilians could be seen carrying their bit of bedding or a chair to an air raid shelter. Babies and children were carried along, their parents hurrying them to clear the streets before dark, and to get a choice spot in the shelter. The people filed down the narrow, dimly lit stairways into the damp basement, and sat or stood where they could. The aged and the very young were given places near the tiny stove which had been set up by a window. A couple of small bulbs gave a feeble glow of light. The people talked and laughed as they tried to cheer one another; the women knitted and the men sucked on their pipes incessantly, emitting the sickly, arid odor of the highly adulterated tobacco. The children became restless, the babies whined and cried, the young men took another drink of wine, and the night wore on endlessly. Ventilation was essentially an unknown convenience and the air in the shelter soon passed the point of being merely foul. Even in such a place, the men were able to get some sleep, for the long day of hard work at the hospital brought them so near to exhaustion that these inconveniences were minor.

On December 27 tragedy came closer to the 77th. The 9th Field Hospital had set up in a school building nearer the center of town and about a mile from the 77th. That day, one of the German jet planes came over in a sneak attack and dropped a five hundred pound bomb which hit directly on the 9th Field. Fortunately, the majority of the patients had been evacuated, so that casualties were less than they might have been. Fourteen persons were killed, most of them patients, and there were nearly fifty injured. The latter included patients, personnel of the hospital and civilians who worked there. Both the dead and the wounded were rushed to the 77th and for hours the receiving room was in a turmoil as the differentiation and treatment went on. Among the dead, decapitations and amputation made the task gruesome, even for the men who had seen so many hundreds of wounded. The patients were rapidly treated, however, and soon the long lines of stretchers were topped by bottles of blood and plasma as the resuscitation went on.

A second bomb the same morning struck the town near one of the ambulances which was evacuating the patients from the 77th to the railroad. One of the patients in the ambulance was killed instantly, another so severely wounded that he died soon afterward; both of these men were being evacuated for relatively minor wounds. Ironically, the other two patients in the ambulance, the driver and his assistant were completely untouched.

On December 30, the first good news began to trickle through, first only a suggestion, and then with repeated rumors and stories so confirmatory that it was accepted. The Allied troops had gained the initiative and the Bulge was beginning to shrink. The tremendous air attacks on the supply columns of the enemy, the repeated bombings of his lines and essential bridges, the incessant pounding with millions of rounds of artillery ammunition, and the

courageous counterattacks in increasing numbers were beginning to be felt. The first reports were only that the Germans were unable to bring up more badly needed reinforcements, then that they were not even attempting to bring in these troops, and finally that they were pulling back in this or that spot. When the elite SS Troopers were pulled out rapidly and in large numbers, leaving only inferior troops to perform the suicidal rear guard missions, von Runstedt as much as admitted that the Battle of the Ardennes was being turned into an Allied victory. Even with such good news, the work of caring for the wounded went on day and night, and the incessant buzz bombs came over with nerve-wracking regularity.

Rumors that the 77th might be moved back in Belgium toward the French border were both welcome and unwelcome; depending on the point of view. It was apparent, however, that the hospital personnel had been working at top speed under marked tension for days, and that a period of rest was definitely indicated. Two other evacuation hospitals were now set up in Verviers, and were able to handle all the casualties without difficulty, as other medical units had been redispersed and the wounded from the troops on the northern flank of the Bulge were being sent to a number of hospitals. The 46th Field Hospital was to move into the building occupied by the 77th. On the last day of the year this unit began to move in and had unpacked much of their material when they were ordered to repack and move back to their original position. In the meantime the 77th had begun packing and moving out, only to have to unpack and set up again when the second order came through. After this comedy of errors was twice repeated (and the men all had sprained backs from carrying the heavy boxes in and out), a final order came through, stating that the 77th was to move out.

New Year's Eve was celebrated in various ways, according to the tastes of the individual. Most of the personnel took advantage of the time to catch up on long lost sleep. A few had the necessary materials to celebrate in the usual manner, and when the liquid stock ran low, one of the more determined officers walked to his quarters to replenish the supply and strolled back nonchalantly under a strafing attack. Early in the morning after buzzing the town for half an hour, a German plane dropped a stick of three bombs. The first hit on the guard shelter at the entrance to the receiving ward. Fortunately, the corporal of the guard had just started out to unlock one of the hospital gates and so was not in the shelter when it was hit. The bomb was thought to be the 250-pound size. No one was injured. A crater about thirty feet in diameter was present in the very center of the road which had been constructed. When the bomb hit, large pieces of concrete were blown over the top of the first story part of the building in the front, and went through the roof of the mess tent. Several tables were broken. Numerous windows were blasted out but this had become such a frequent occurrence that little attention was paid to this damage, other than instructing the civilian workers to replace the windows as best they could.

On New Year's Day Hitler made a speech with the usual promises; the main one being that Germany would be victorious within six months. As if to give lie to this with the least possible loss of time, there were 4000 Allied sorties flown that day, and 193 German planes knocked down out of the few that ventured to come up.

Reconnaissance parties were sent out to find a new location for the 77th. The first two were unable to find a suitable place, but the third group was eminently successful, despite the fact that they were strafed as they left the hospital and twice again during the day while on the road.

On January 3, there was still some doubt that the unit would really move, until the advance party left and then the change was confirmed. The buzz bombs were now coming in the greatest numbers that the 77th had seen. Again the robots landed all around but none close enough to the hospital to cause any damage. On January 4, the main group moved from Verviers to La Louviere, Belgium. The nurses traveled in ambulances for the first time on the continent, a few of the officers rode in one six-by-six, and the remainder with the drivers of the ten-ton trucks which hauled the equipment. This latter group, who felt that they were very fortunate to have been chosen by the drawing, were not so lucky. The main convoy did not start until almost noon, and had not reached their destination when night came on. The roads were by then covered with ice, and as the drivers slowed down very little for such a minor inconvenience, there were several narrow escapes from bad wrecks. Also, until the convoy had passed well beyond Liege, the robot bombs continued to drop close, one striking within a short distance of the road as the convoy passed. The truck in which Capt. Nihil Venis was riding had stopped when the driver saw the civilians running for shelter, and as Capt. Venis started to get out to find the cause of the excitement, the blast from the bomb slammed the truck door in his face. Cold, ice and snow made the trip miserable. Most of the enlisted men rode in six-by-sixes, but some rode on top of the equipment.

All along the road there were seen units moving to the front. The character of the traffic had changed now, as it was an orderly advance toward the front lines, whereas at the beginning of the Bulge hundreds of units had been striving to reach the front in any order and with all possible speed.

The contrast between the towns of Verviers and La Louviere was remarkable. There had been no troops stationed in La Louviere and for two weeks the 77th had the town almost to themselves. From the dismal groping blindness of the blackout the 77th was transported to the dim but adequate street lights, the first that many of the personnel had seen since leaving the States in 1942. The street cars had dim lights also, but compared to what had been seen, appeared to be blazing with light. The apprehension which had been so visible in the faces and reactions of the people of Verviers contrasted greatly with that of the citizens of La Louviere. These people appeared secure in their knowledge that liberation was a fact and that oppression by the Nazis would never return. For the first day or two the personnel of the 77th imagined that they were intruders, and that they should be near the front where the casualties were, at least this was the inference from the unsmiling glances which the civilians gave them. In a few days, however, their friendliness far surpassed that of the people of Verviers. The soldiers were overwhelmed with overtures to friendship, smiles, nods and a tip of the hat.

In La Louviere, the air raid siren was blown at the slightest provocation, and usually there were either no planes or only those of the AAF or RAF. This, too, con-

trusted sharply with Verviers, where the air raid siren usually blew as the first bombs were landing. The repeated roar of the buzz bombs had become such a familiar sound that the town seemed unusually quiet. The whole impression was that the war had left the 77th far behind and although work was still necessary, the mission took on the aspects of a mass furlough.

La Louviere, a town of about 25,000 people, is in the coal mining area, and this is the principal industry, although there are numerous small plants and factories in and near the town. The town itself has a business section of fair size, and every other business establishment along any street is a cafe.

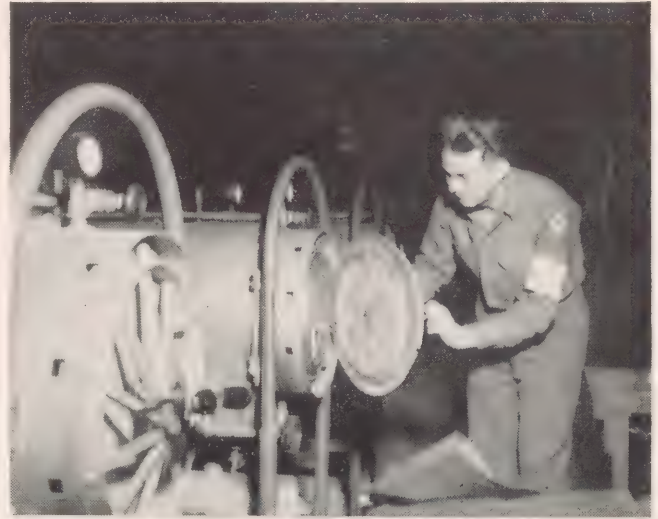
Three schools were taken over to serve as the hospital and living quarters. St. Joseph's, a secondary school, was the largest in the town, and this was used as the hospital. This building had been used as a barracks by the Germans during the occupation, but the priests had already started classes again, and it was with some reticence that they allowed their building to be used as a hospital—not because they feared any damage would result, but they did not like to interrupt again the classes which had just been resumed. The school building was in two sections, one which was rather old, and a new section which had been constructed just before the war began. The old part of



THE CHAPEL

the school had high ceilings and numerous glass partitions. In the front part of the building was a beautiful chapel and an unusual courtesy was extended when permission was given by the Father in charge for the Protestant chaplain to conduct his services there also. This was especially appreciated by a number of the patients. The remainder of the old building was shaped like the letter "U," with the new addition coming off the upper part of the right wing. Along the front part of the building the administrative offices were set up. The largest classrooms along the left wing were put to the greatest use. Two very large lecture halls were made into wards for bed patients, one for the surgical service and the other for the medical service. Each of these wards held about forty patients. In the other rooms on the first floor of this wing were located surgical headquarters, plaster room, shock, central supply, operating room, dental clinic, EENT clinic, and the x-ray department. At the rear of this wing was a very large room, which was used as the patient's

mess. On the second floor, medical wards were set up, and by utilizing a number of small rooms and all available hall space, a large number of beds could be placed here. The third floor had been used as a dormitory, and



CENTRAL SUPPLY

here were a large number of cubicles containing bunks. This was also used as a medical ward.

In the right wing of the old building the supply section was set up with its store rooms. Pharmacy and the laboratory were also located here. In the basement of this section was the shower room, not as large or as well built as the one in the school at Verviers, but at least it had showers.

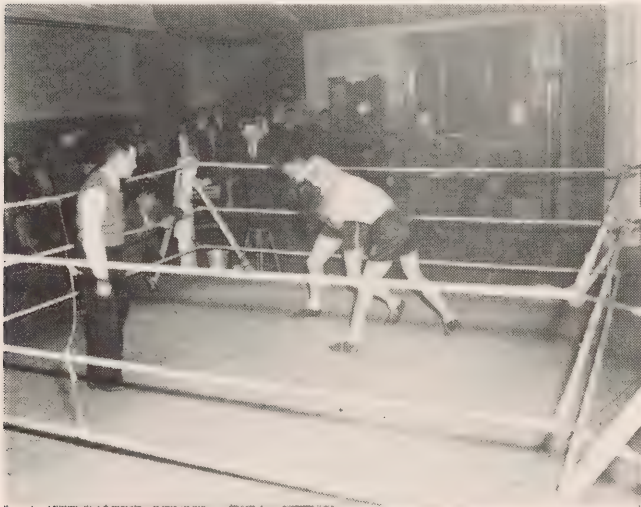
The new section of the school had two floors. The second floor had one large room with enough space to contain 140 beds which were used for surgical patients. On the first floor was another large room which also accommodated surgical patients and had approximately 80 beds. In the large corridor on this floor the sick-call room and receiving office were set up. The main attraction of the entire school was the auditorium which was attached to this section. This was an extremely large room with a balcony on three sides and a large stage. Regular theater seats filled two-thirds of the floor space. The auditorium was given over to the Red Cross.

Movies, USO shows and orientation lectures were given in the auditorium. Snooker tables and desks for letter writing were set up by the Red Cross in the back of the room. A snack bar was also built, a radio-phonograph made available, and plenty of easy chairs placed about. In the small rooms back-stage, there was a reading room, sewing room, pingpong table and barber shop.

The mission of the hospital at this time was the care of convalescent patients. These men were theoretically nearly enough recovered to be able to return to duty within thirty days after they had been received by the 77th. The majority of the patients came by train from the general hospitals in Liege. The amount of medical care which they required was very little. At the same time, however, the 77th served as a station hospital for troops which were being moved into the vicinity. The efficiency of the hospital was maintained but there was nevertheless plenty of leisure time. The greatest difficulty lay in providing entertainment and diversion for the patients who were com-

pleting their convalescence. Most of the patients were able to be up, but passes allowing them out of the hospital could not be authorized. Nearly every night some of the patients avoided the guard and managed to get over the fence and up into town. Most of these men were able to reascend the fence and get back into the hospital after their visit to the cafes. A few had to use the more accessible front door and were apprehended, and as a result some of the medical officers were soon practicing more law than medicine. On the whole, however, the patients were exceedingly cooperative in view of the tempting cafes and stores after the front line fighting they had been through.

The Red Cross at this time had the advantage of all the enumerated facilities, and in addition worked just as hard as ever to provide entertainment. Pin-up girl pictures were placed about the theater, and a number of large posters headed by division insignia were also put up for signatures of members of these units. Contests were held for the patients, with prizes for the picture of the prettiest baby or the most beautiful wife or sweetheart. With the



BELGIAN BOXERS

aid of local civilians, a shopping service was developed and a sewing room opened to repair uniforms. A special barber shop for patients was opened, employing an expert Belgian hairdresser. Every Saturday afternoon a dance was held for patients, with the young, attractive mademoiselles of the town as the guests. A local Belgian orchestra labored through the intricate difficulties of American jazz, and the young ladies quickly learned to jitterbug. Sandwiches and other refreshments were served. Two showings of the available (and usually latest) movies were given each evening. On two occasions, boxing exhibitions were given through the arrangements of some of the people of La Louviere. The men were from the vicinity, and each one a champion of some sort. While the boxers may not have excelled, they made up for this by their enthusiasm. Three USO show units visited the 77th during this time.

Because of the great amount of work necessary to make the buildings suitable for occupancy as a hospital, a large number of civilians were hired. These people received very small wages, as their pay was regulated by the Belgian government, but they were more than willing to work

for the food which they received. The buildings had received little care for years prior to their occupation by the 77th and, consequently, both repairs and actual construction had to be carried out. The furnaces were cleaned out for the first time in over twenty years. The sewers had been in for so long that a large section had to be completely replaced. The windows were filthy with the accumulation of grease and soot over many months and required repeated washing before they were clean. Black-out shades had to be constructed for all the large and numerous windows. A few alterations were needed to make some of the essentials of a hospital. The latrine situation was particularly acute. There were only five inside toilets to serve the entire hospital. On the outside in the courtyard was a line of exposed urinals and toilets, but this was a bit too public for the American idea of privacy. These were all properly screened, cleaned and repaired; but the cold weather did not make their use too attractive. A number of the toilets had been stolen or removed by the Jerries when they left and replacements had to be found and installed. With such meager facilities, the patients had some justification in their griping about having to "line up for chow, for pay, for equipment—line up for everything, and now line up for the toilet!"

The enlisted men's mess was set up in a tent in the courtyard. This was not too bad while the ground was frozen, although it made dining a rather cooling affair, but it became almost intolerable when the ground thawed and became a sea of mud. The electrician's tent and the sterilizers were also placed in the courtyard.

The guards, with their usual thankless task, were now much less concerned by attempted sabotage, but were kept busy by the stream of patients climbing in and out over the walls. The weather was so cold that it was necessary to change guards every hour so that the men could have an opportunity to get warm. An additional irritation to the guards, initiated in Verviers, was the nightly inspections by an officer of the command.

The hospital was officially opened on January 9, 1945, when the first hospital train from Liege was received. The census for that evening was 392. Thereafter, there were three more hospital trains with about the same number of patients. In addition, there was a constant stream of admissions from nearby units, never in particularly large numbers, but always sufficient to keep the hospital fairly busy. The outpatient service enlarged rapidly, and these men took considerable care. A large number of men were examined for commission, and during the latter part of the stay, even more were examined for physical fitness for combat duty.

Five men were lost from the roster of the 77th as a result of transfer to combat units. These men were Sgt. Bernard Colbert, Cpl. Joseph A. Uzas, T/5 Frank Danero, T/5 Horace C. Harrell and Pfc. Joseph T. Schmidt. In February, nine of the men received commissions as Second Lieutenant, Medical Administrative Corps, and left the 77th. These men and their new assignments were: John T. Greco to the 9th Field Hospital, Walter L. Mason to ADSEC Headquarters, Keith H. Gibbs to the 428th Medical Battalion, James E. Cover to the 12th Field Hospital, Ormand F. Cook to the 58th General Hospital, John W. Clason to the 100th General Hospital, Reed L. Cox to the 298th General Hospital, James E. Maye to CBS Headquarters, and Roland B. Stotter to the 16th General Hospital.

In January, Maj. Edwin S. Wright was transferred to the 114th General Hospital in England and Capt. Ralph Arnold reported as his replacement. Capt. Ira P. Burdine, Capt. Oren D. Boyce and Lt. Thomas Long were evacuated because of illness which eventually necessitated their return to the United States. Chaplain Walter R. Floyd was returned to the States on rotation, and Capt. Nihil K. Venis was granted an emergency leave to the States and left after arrangements were completed. Lt. Violet Mahan and Lt. Mary Ewing were also sent back to the States on leave. T/5 George Haire was the first and only enlisted man to be sent home on the 30-day rotation plan. Three men were sent on detached service to a hospital ship and allowed ten days at home before the return voyage. These men were selected by lot and the following were allowed to go: T/5 Earle E. Coffman, Pfc. Gordon F. Ranney, and Pfc. Earl G. Brown. Another important change for the personnel was the occasion when many of the nurses were promoted from second to first lieutenant.

At this time, the first faint stirrings of the famous Information and Education program were made, and Maj. Morris S. Harless was sent to the first school for directors of unit programs. This was held in Paris, and on his return Major Harless immediately began work on the course to be followed in the 77th. The program met with some doubt and reticence at first, but as time progressed, its value came to be recognized. Weekly orientation lectures were given by the various members of the hospital staff, and all personnel were required to attend. There were discussed such subjects as: "Britain's Contribution to the War", "The GI Bill of Rights", "The Dumbarton Oaks Plan", "What It Will Mean for America to Win the War". One entire afternoon was devoted to a forum on "How to Improve the Cleanliness and Efficiency of This Hospital." The head of each department was permitted to speak for a limited time, and many valuable suggestions were made. Capt. Katzen discussed the new receiving system which had already been initiated, and made several minor suggestions for further improvements in its use. Capt. Bessie Walker made a very stimulating talk concerning the difficulties and needed improvements from the nurses' point of view. Also, as a result of a suggestion made at this meeting, a box was placed at the door of Headquarters marked "Bitches and Bellyaches", and into this receptacle patients and hospital personnel could place signed or unsigned complaints or suggestions.

In January, 1945, on the stage of the auditorium of the hospital at La Louviere, Belgium, Col. Dean M. Walker presented the Legion of Merit to Lt. Col. James B. Weaver, and the Bronze Star Medal to 2nd Lt. Marion A. Cross, T/Sgt. Chauncey M. Felt, and T/3 Keith M. Gibbs. In February, at the same place, Col. Walker presented Bronze Star Medals to the following: Maj. Wayne C. Bartlett, Chaplain James E. McEvoy, 1st Lt. Ellsworth A. Frederick, 2nd Lt. Earl L. Hoard and S/Sgt. Ormand F. Cook. The citations for these presentations were as follows:

"Lt. Col. James B. Weaver received the Legion of Merit for his initiative, professional skill and foresight, and having organized the Surgical Service of the hospital to operate smoothly and effectively, making it possible to do over two hundred operations daily with minimal delay and with a limited staff, thus saving much suffering and returning many soldiers to duty sooner than would ordinarily have been the case."

Second Lt. Marion A. Cross was awarded the Bronze Star Medal in that, "as acting hospital dietitian of the hospital when the unit took over the operation of two separate hospitals in Oran, Algeria, shortly after the invasion of North Africa, she found very little food and no cooking utensils, mess gear or stoves to work with, as the unit's equipment had not yet arrived. However, in the face of these odds, she displayed great ingenuity, initiative and ability, and by working day and night, obtained food and equipment by borrowing from the French popu-



SNOW SCENES IN TOWN OF LA LOUVIERE

lation and in an incredibly short time produced a smooth working patient's mess. Her ingenuity in preparing emergency rations appetizingly was an outstanding contribution to the morale of the patients in both hospitals. Throughout the entire North African campaign, she supervised the preparation of all food in the patient's mess and prepared the majority of the special diets herself. Although she frequently worked eighteen hours a day to improve the quality of the meals, she always found time to contact personally the seriously ill patients in an effort to determine what special dishes she could prepare for them, and her personal interest and efforts in this respect contributed materially to the care and comfort of the patients. Again in the campaign in Western Europe when the bed capacity of this hospital was tripled and was without the services of a dietitian, she volunteered and showed the same untiring devotion to duty with the result that the patient's mess was of the highest possible quality."

T/Sgt. Chauncey M. Felt was awarded the Bronze Star Medal in that, "as non-commissioned officer in charge of the operating rooms of the hospital, he trained the enlisted personnel of his department to such a degree of efficiency that it was possible to release several nurses from the operating rooms to other understaffed departments. He showed marked ability in improvisation and planning the physical set-up of the operating rooms, so as to produce maximum efficiency with cleanliness and order."

T/3 Keith H. Gibbs was awarded the Bronze Star Medal since, "in addition to his duties as non-commissioned officer in charge of minor surgery and EENT clinic, he helped plan the ground lay-out of this hospital, advancing several innovations which were incorporated in the Standard Operating Procedure, and has been in charge of laying out the grounds and road, bridge, sewer and culvert construction of the hospital on each successive move. He or-

ganized the minor surgery and EENT clinic, trained the enlisted personnel, and due to the shortage of personnel, had to supervise both the day and night shifts during periods of great activity during both the North African and European Campaigns."

Maj. Wayne C. Bartlett was awarded the Bronze Star Medal in that, "in addition to his duties as chief of a general surgical team, he was placed in charge of some one hundred and fifty seriously wounded British and American patients at the Military Hospital of Oran, Algeria, immediately after the North African invasion. These patients had had very little medical attention or care of any kind. Though apart from the main body of his unit, and without surgical, medical or nursing equipment, Maj. Bartlett worked with ceaseless energy and with rare short intervals of sleep, securing some equipment, and the hospital functioned. He did much of the surgery himself and directed the remainder, as well as supervised feeding, clothing, and nursing care of the patients. In a few days, order was brought out of chaos, and it was possible to evacuate the entire group as well-cared-for patients. In supervising all departments of the hospital, in addition to the work of his team, his driving energy and tireless capacity for work was amazing and far beyond the physical capacities of the ordinary individual. His profound devotion to duty did not permit him to rest long as there were wounded to be cared for, and he worked eighteen to twenty hours a day. His work was done rapidly, intelligently and thoroughly, and in supervising the priority of patients for operation, he exhibited outstanding professional skill and surgical judgment."

Chaplain (Captain) James E. McEvoy was awarded the Bronze Star Medal "for his professional skill, integrity and cheerful enthusiasm which contributed immeasurably to the morale and spiritual comfort of his organization (First United States Infantry Division) during the North African and Sicilian campaigns. Chaplain McEvoy had previously, in December, 1943, been awarded the Soldier's Medal by the First United States Infantry Division for heroism in the vicinity of Gela, Sicily, July 10, 1943. After having safely reached shore during landing operations, Chaplain McEvoy observed a soldier struggling in the treacherous surf and on the verge of drowning. He immediately plunged into the rough sea, swam to the helpless man's side, and assisted him to safety."

First Lt. Ellsworth A. Frederick was awarded the Bronze Star Medal in that, "prior to the invasion of Western Europe, he was placed in charge of the then existing mess and with fine ability, patience and industry, trained cooks, bakers, and helpers, not only in the art of cooking and baking, but also in mess management, setting up and tearing down under field conditions, cleanliness, sanitation, improvisation and conservation. So well did he organize the three mess installations of the hospital, officers' mess, enlisted men's mess, and patients' mess, that they became "show places" and models of efficiency, cleanliness and order. The rapidity with which the messes have been set up in the field, often under adverse conditions, and a hot meal served to both patients and personnel, has been amazing. The patients' mess, in particular, has functioned exceedingly well. As many as 2,000 patients have been served from this single mess in one meal period. Lt. Frederick also set up a 24-hour "snack bar" where ambulance drivers and casuals could get a hot meal at any time, regardless

of the hour. Even under the most trying conditions, the food has always been more than adequate and the monotony of sameness was avoided by improvisation, industry and ingenuity. The entire mess personnel have all been enthusiastic, industrious, and have taken a tremendous pride in their work, due mainly to Lt. Frederick's excellent training and his fine example of devotion to duty."

Second Lt. Earl L. Hoard was awarded the Bronze Star Medal in that, "as unit supply officer, he travelled day and night, prior to our departure to the continent, acquiring medical supplies necessary for the unit's function. He supervised the packing of these supplies for shipment and their transport to Western Europe. Through his untiring effort, sound judgment and initiative, this hospital was able to set up in France with sufficient supplies and equipment to carry out its original assignment. When this unit was called upon to triple its bed capacity on short notice, and many essential items of supply were needed immediately, Lt. Hoard, with tireless energy and a comprehensive grasp of supply problems, scoured every available source and within a few days had acquired the supplies necessary to enable the unit to function efficiently."

S/Sgt. Ormond F. Cook was awarded the Bronze Star Medal in that, "as chief technician of the x-ray department of the hospital, he designed and constructed the entire internal electrical system of the x-ray department under adverse conditions and under considerable difficulties of supply. This plan has proved so efficient that at the request of the Theater Coordinator of Radiology, it has been submitted for use as a pattern for other installations. In addition, when this hospital first functioned in North Africa, immediately following the invasion, certain essential x-ray equipment was found to be missing; however, Sgt. Cook drew up plans which led to the construction of processing tanks and dark rooms in the field, making it possible for the department to function efficiently. He is largely responsible for the training of the enlisted personnel of his department into a smoothly operating group of technically trained men and a consistently large percentage of patients have been examined by this department without serious delay largely due to his organizational ability. Due to his technical ability and ingenuity at improvisation, although often called upon to give twenty-four hour service for weeks at a time during active periods of operation, this department has never had a breakdown of physical equipment. He consistently gave more of his time to the department than the full call of duty required working on plans for the improvement of the service and equipment."

Col. Dean M. Walker was awarded the Bronze Star Medal and the *Croix de Guerre* with silver star in January, 1945, at a special formation at Headquarters, Advance Section, Communications Zone. "Colonel Walker's exceptional standards and practices which were instilled in the personnel under his command were evidenced when the hospital was placed in close support of the First United States Army in France won him the award of the Bronze Star Medal. Exceptional services given during the course of operations of the Liberation of France, won for Colonel Walker the award of the French *Croix de Guerre* with silver star from the President of the Provisional Government of the French Republic."

Capt. John F. Bowser was presented the Bronze Star

Medal in February, 1945, at the 100th General Hospital. The award was made in that, "as chief of the x-ray department of the 77th Evacuation Hospital, Capt. Bowser exhibited great diligence, foresight, and perseverance in planning, equipping and training an excellent department and staff during the organization and training of this hospital. During the early days of the North African campaign, when x-ray equipment of our own use was not available, Capt. Bowser scoured the local countryside, and with great ingenuity and skill, and under adverse conditions due to unfriendly local population, set up a creditable x-ray department in two separate hospitals. Since that time, his field x-ray unit has frequently given twenty-four hour service for weeks at a time, without a single breakdown in service, and with Capt. Bowser in attendance the greater part of the time, rendering invaluable service in his skilled interpretations of x-ray films and fluoroscopic examinations. Over 4000 patients were examined by his department in North Africa, many more in Sicily and the United Kingdom, and some 2500 up to date on the continent."

T/3 Robert J. Gerlach in February, 1945, was also presented the Bronze Star Medal at an unknown place after his transfer from the 77th Evacuation Hospital. The award was made in that, "as non-commissioned officer in charge of the evacuation department of the hospital, T/3 (then T/4) Gerlach was chiefly responsible for the organization and set-up of this department and, on his own initiative, perfected an exceptionally efficient system of evacuation which was used by this hospital throughout the North African Campaign and to date in Western Europe. His intense application to detail and tireless energy in surmounting the many technical difficulties involved, particularly in the mass evacuation at Oran, Algeria, on January 12, 1943, and during the Kasserine Pass operations, enabled this unit to evacuate approximately 14,000 patients from November 11, 1942, to June 15, 1943, with a minimum of delay and paper work, which greatly contributed to the morale of the patients being evacuated. He frequently worked day and night in the performance of his duties throughout the Tunisian Campaign and there was not a single error in the final records he submitted."

Miss Natalie Gould in January, 1945, at the Red Cross Headquarters in Paris, was presented the Bronze Star Medal, awarded by the President of the United States. "Miss Gould, as recreation worker and American Red Cross representative of the 77th Evacuation Hospital, has done an exceptionally fine job of planning and carrying out a recreational program for patients. Often working under very trying conditions during extended periods of active operations, she displayed great courage, tact and tireless energy in scouring every available source, and often contributing from her own personal funds, for necessary supplies which contributed greatly to the morale and welfare of patients. Near the close of the Tunisian Campaign, she suffered a broken ankle. However, she refused hospitalization in the rear in order to stay with her job, and as soon as she could hobble around on a cast, she resumed her daily ward rounds, giving each patient a word of cheer and supplying him with the necessary tobacco and toilet articles, in addition to supervising and directing the recreation program in the Red Cross tent."

During the early part of the stay at La Louviere, the official report of the hospital for the year 1944 was com-

pleted and a number of interesting facts learned. The number of admissions to the hospital on the continent was as follows:

Ste. Mere Eglise	3,234
Ste. Lo	6,794
Chartres	2,978
Clermont-en-Argonne	1,155
Verviers	20,925
	35,086

At Ste. Lo, during the first twelve hours after opening, approximately 1,400 patients passed through the receiving tent. For the entire six days that the hospital was open here, 44 patients per hour were seen. During the time the unit was at Verviers, there were admitted an average of 265 patients per day over a period of 79 days. The largest number of patients at one time saw the census at 1,454.

The report of the Surgical Service showed that there had been 25,408 admissions during the year, and, in addition, 5,659 patients had been triaged. 9,967 operations were performed. During the year 1944, there were 94 deaths on the Surgical Service, a mortality rate of 0.37%. Forty-six cases of gas gangrene were seen, with five deaths. These patients required three upper and twenty-one lower extremity amputations, while the remainder were treated by wide incision and drainage. The anesthesia department had not started complete reports until the middle of the year, but there were recorded 6,510 anesthetics, of which there were 306 (4.7%) inhalation type, 1,213 (18.7%) regional block, 4,937 (75.3%) intravenous sodium pentothal, and 141 other anesthetics. The shock department administered 1,997 units of plasma, 678 units of whole blood, and 1,155 liters of various intravenous fluids. In the x-ray department, there were 6,026 examinations with 4,428 radiographic and 1,186 fluoroscopic examinations, the remainder being special examinations. The dental clinic had 3,587 sittings.

For the Medical Service, there were 6,232 admissions and 645 patients were triaged. 231 consultations were given. There were seen 1,090 patients with upper respiratory infections, there being 174 cases of pneumonia of which 104 were of the atypical type. 371 patients were admitted with malaria, the majority being recurrent, with one patient actually having his eighth remission. The laboratory performed 12,921 tests, and the pharmacy dispensed an average of 1,650 prescriptions per month.

From the report of the chief nurse, more interesting facts were noted. The hospital was open and functioning 193 days during the year. Nurses gave approximately 3,000 anesthetics. The daily average of linen used and sterilized was as follows: 400 hand towels, 200 bath towels, 75 sheets, 50 operating gowns and 150 pairs of gloves. Twenty pounds of vaseline was used weekly for vaseline gauze.

During the year, the supply department issued to patients alone 9,000 pairs of drawers, 9,550 undershirts, 4,500 pairs of socks and 1,500 OD uniforms. In the linen supply, 245,857 pounds of linen were handled. This included 100,000 sheets, 154,000 hand towels, 77,200 bath towels, 48,200 pairs of pajamas, 4,825 operating gowns, 9,650 blankets, 3,860 pillow cases and 3,860 bath robes. In the enlisted men's laundry, there were 93,600 bundles. The motor pool, another section of supply department,

reported that their vehicles were driven 149,950 miles during the year. T/5 Joseph B. Martello drove his truck 31,800 miles prior to replacement, T/5 Orville D. Duncan drove 29,500 miles and T/5 Orville Crawford drove 36,400 miles before replacement was necessary. There were no major accidents. 187,200 gallons of gasoline were consumed. T/4 Edward T. Scully and his helpers repaired 750 cots. T/4 Richard B. Logan painted 1,400 signs in addition to cutting stencils and similar duties. Each time the hospital was moved and set up, T/4 Gordon W. Grattias, T/4 Daniel C. Koenn, Pfc. Grady H. Griggs and Pfc. Michael Trokel erected 12 miles of electric wire.

In La Louviere the enlisted men were quartered in the Ecole Moyenne Industrielle, which was located near the business section of the town and about a mile from the hospital. The buildings had been in active use for school purposes until the time they were occupied by the enlisted men, so that all the necessary equipment was still in the rooms. This had to be removed and stacked in the halls. The buildings were gradually cleaned and put into order. The problem of obtaining ventilation and at the same time maintaining a strict blackout, or even a moderate blackout, was never solved completely. Although the building was steam heated, a door left ajar for ventilation soon let in too much cold air. Despite these inconveniences, the quarters were warm and comfortable the greater part of the time.

On the top floor of the front wing of the school were two large rooms which were promptly converted into a lounge and a dance hall. Dances were held every Saturday night, and gradually increased in popularity, until a climax was reached one night. This was the occasion after a number of other units had moved into the town and the special service club was holding a dance. Late in the evening, the special service officer of the town came to the barracks, searching for the girls of the town, as it developed that all the girls had chosen to attend the 77th's dance, and there were so few at the special service dance that it was something less than a success.

Despite their reduced rations and inadequate supply of clothing, the Belgian girls still managed to appear smart and well dressed, and it was only natural that some of the men should take more than casual interest in them. A number of the couples that met at these dances were later married.

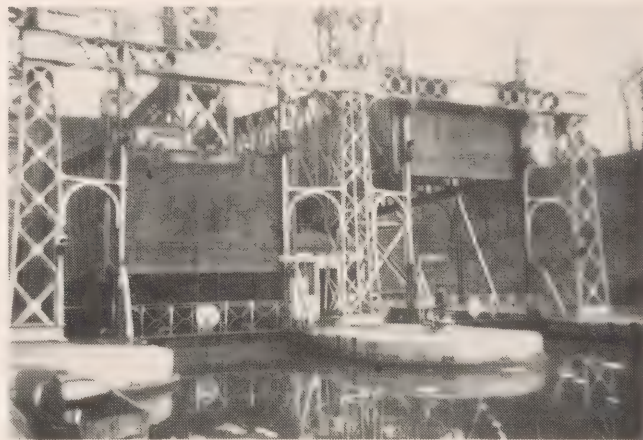
Because of the large amount of personal property that had to be left at the barracks during working hours, a charge of quarters remained at the building twenty-four hours a day. His main duties eventually turned out to be the expulsion of gate-crashers at the weekly dances.

The officers and nurses were quartered in the Ecole Moyenne des Filles, a two-story, U-shaped structure. The civilians of the maintenance staff and the officers of the school lived in the front of the building. The officers were quartered on the two floors of the right wing of the building, with six or seven men to each classroom. The nurses occupied part of the first and all of the second floor of the left wing. The second floor on the nurses' side was especially suited to this purpose as this was a large dormitory with individual cubicles. On the first floor, the mess was set up, and breakfast and supper were served here. A small gymnasium was converted into a recreation room.

As the weather was very cold, the steam heated building was greatly appreciated. Purchase of lamps, cords, sockets and other small pieces of equipment added to the individual comforts. The desks, chairs, maps, stands and other schoolroom supplies were moved out into the halls, only to be carried back later to serve as writing desks and bedside tables. The greatest discomfort was that of the officers as the outdoor toilet was a bit chilly for early morning visits.

As the enlisted men had done, the officers and nurses had a series of Saturday evening parties. A civilian orchestra was employed, and a number of officers from units stationed nearby were invited. The dances were greatly enjoyed by all, especially a group from Room 4, who soon became known as the "team" with Lt. Fredericks as the coach. The latter required training all during the week for these functions. A number of the Air Corps, on one occasion, arrived complete with orchestra and refreshments, and this was perhaps one of the best of the series of dances.

The town provided many things which had not been available since leaving England. The numerous cafes were visited with perhaps even greater frequency than the pubs had been in England. Each cafe had a small orchestra, comfortable seats, weak beer, expensive wine and a dense haze of cigarette smoke. A number of cleaning and pressing shops had a sudden increase in business when the 77th arrived. Such service had not been available for months, and full advantage was taken of the opportunity. The stores were visited innumerable times, with everyone on the lookout for a bargain, but few were found.



MECHANICAL LOCKS ON THE CANAL

The Army soon took over one of the theaters, and American films were shown three nights weekly. As this was only a few blocks from the barracks, it was convenient and frequently attended. Many friends were made among the civilians of the town, who invited the personnel of the hospital to their homes repeatedly. Despite their meager rations, they always managed to have some form of refreshments or even a full meal, and the men responded with gifts of chocolate, cigarettes and similar articles. A number of points in the town were of interest and were visited. The unusual method of stringing innumerable wires to stores and homes from towers placed at a distance of several blocks apart was commented on. The outdoor sidewalk toilets were always noted with some

awe, even though seen many times before. The mechanical locks on the canal were interesting to those with a mechanical turn. A number of factories, although not working, were visited by the men, as the resident managers were only too glad to escort them around. Although not a notable landmark, the railroad crossing the main street will not be forgotten by anyone in the 77th. Repeatedly, and especially if the weather was very bad, a



THE RAILROAD CROSSING AT LA LOUVIERE

long train would be across the street and one would stand, shifting from one foot to the other for what seemed like hours waiting for the train to move, this despite the fact that there was a foot bridge over the track to enable one to avoid such delay.

On February 23, two surgical teams were ordered out to Ninth Army Surgeon's Headquarters, and the personnel of the 77th sensed that something was about to break. Confirmation was not long in coming.

The Battle of the Bulge had ended and the Germans were driven back into their former positions. On the northern part of the front, the Roer River represented the dividing line. The Russians had made phenomenal advances on the Eastern Front; the British and Canadians had made repeated small advances on the northern part of the Western Front. On February 23, the entire Ninth Army and part of the First Army jumped off across the Roer. The river had been swollen due to the flood gates having been opened by the Germans, but now it could be crossed, and the American troops did cross at ten different points on a twenty-two mile front from south of Duren to north of Linnich. Within two days, all division bridgeheads were linked in a continuous twenty-five mile strip of front, with each division bulging out rapidly. The 30th Infantry Division was within five miles of the Erft River; then the advance moved rapidly. Erkelenz fell, Munchen-Gladbach was outflanked, then entered and passed. The 35th Infantry Division made new crossings of the Roer near Roermund and turned sharply north. Venlo was reached, then Geldern, and the British contacted on the north. Neuss was captured by the 83rd Infantry Division as the Germans blew up the bridge crossing the Rhine to Dusseldorf. First Army continued the drive toward Cologne, and by March 6, the city was cleared by the 3rd Armored Division, and the 8th and 104th Infantry Divisions. Except for two pockets, the west bank of the

Rhine was cleared as far south as Cologne. Below Cologne, the 9th Armored Division spearheaded an attack that took Euskirchen and then swept to the Rhine at Remagen, where they found the Ludendorff railroad bridge intact. The first patrols crossed the bridge in the afternoon of March 7, and from then on it was a race to get as much across as possible as quickly as possible. In five days the bridgehead was nearly five miles deep and ten miles long. Von Runstedt knew the meaning of this and German divisions were speeding to try to push back the Americans, but the defense was too late.

While attention focused at Remagen, the 1st Infantry Division took Bonn, and the 9th took Bad Godesburg. To the south, the Third Army made a spectacular drive of fifty miles in two days to reach the Rhine, and soon a wide salient had been cleared. And now all along the front the pressure increased. Town after town fell, and the advances continued at an unbelievable pace.

The first surgical team, consisting of Maj. Thomas G. Duckett, Capt. Glenn C. Franklin, Lt. Josephine R. Zeman, Lt. Elaine P. Schuler, Sgt. Arthur J. Girty and T/5 Earl J. Lair, was sent to the 100th Evacuation Hospital in Terwinselen, Holland, which was set up in a large school building, but with the personnel quartered in tents. Here they worked extremely hard, on a continuous eight-hours-on and eight-hours-off shift, which made any more than a short period of sleep difficult to obtain. A very concentrated series of major surgical cases were cared for, for the casualties were heavy during the Roer River crossings. On March 7, this hospital moved to Suchteln, Germany, where they were very busy for several days and then the admissions gradually decreased. Air Force activity was heavy over this area, and artillery barrages could be heard. The enormous preparations to cross the Rhine continued and on March 23, the 100th with the attached surgical teams moved to a site near Rhineburg, about 2,000 yards from the Rhine. For security reasons, the hospital had to be erected quickly and ready to function, which was done during the morning and early afternoon of March 23. During the afternoon flight after flight of medium bombers passed overhead, bombing the German defenses just across the Rhine. Throughout the night there was an extremely heavy artillery barrage from the long-range guns which surrounded the hospital area, and the flashes and concussion made sleep impossible. Later in the morning the casualties began coming in and reported a successful crossing of the Rhine. The troop carriers of the 17th Airborne Division passed over on their way to secure positions behind the German lines. On the afternoon of March 24 the team was ordered to return to the 77th at Munchen-Gladbach. This team received a very complimentary letter of commendation from the commanding officer of the 100th Evacuation Hospital for their excellent work while with this unit.

The second surgical team, consisting of Capt. Raymond W. Postlethwait, Capt. Homer Head, Lt. Clio E. Shirley, Lt. Dorothy D. Downs, T/4 John E. Russ, and T/5 Oscar E. Nelson, was sent to the 108th Evacuation Hospital, at Vaals, Holland. This team started to work immediately upon arrival, despite the all-day trip, and here helped care for men, mainly from the 29th, 30th and 84th Divisions. On March 2, with another surgical team from the 5th Auxiliary Surgical Group, they were transferred to the 114th Evacuation Hospital at Hertzogenrath, Germany. This hospital had just come over from the States

and this was their first mission, so some confusion occurred. However, a fairly large number of casualties were handled during the first ten days. On March 23, the 108th moved to a site near Geldern, Germany, and set up in tents. This team reported back to the 77th on March 29.

The following officers were sent to the 12th Field Hospital at Aachen which did important triage work during this phase of the campaign: Maj. Martin F. Anderson, Capt. Walter J. Olsewski, Capt. Robert L. Newman, Capt. Robert W. Forsythe, Capt. Gordon S. Voorhees and Capt. Jacob Brickman.

The 77th was by now impatient to be back toward the front, and on March 14, orders were finally received and the reconnaissance party left to select a site at Munchen-Gladbach, Germany. The advance party, under the direction of Lt. Col. Mervin J. Rumold, Maj. Paul R. Harrington and Lt. Marvin L. Bowers, soon arrived at the selected area, and were followed in a few days by another larger group with new tentage. On March 22, the main body of the hospital left La Louviere and arrived in Munchen-Gladbach.

VERVIERS PROMOTIONS AND COMMISSIONS

NOVEMBER, 1944:

TO LT. COL.—Maurice Snyder.

TO CAPT.—William I. Gautschi, Raymond Katzen and Louis I. Millman.

TO 1ST LT.—Marvin L. Bowers and Earl J. Hoard.

TO TECHNICIAN 5TH GRADE—Howard G. Klein and James T. Scott.

DECEMBER, 1944:

TO CAPT.—John G. Shellito and Hermina M. Nahrendorf.

TO 1ST LT.—Marion A. Cross, Marjorie N. Hart, Helen A. McIntosh, Elaine P. Schuler and Edith J. Snyder.

JOINED THE UNIT

OCTOBER, 1944:

Lt. Sidney Druce, M.C., 2nd Lt. Anna M. Knuibas, A.N.C., 2nd Lt. Gladys J. Rodriguez, A.N.C., Miss Odele Lentz, Victor Despa, Andre Jamar, the latter three as interpreters.

NOVEMBER, 1944:

Capt. Jacob B. Brickman, M.C., and 1st Lt. Eva M. Reese, A.N.C.

DECEMBER, 1944:

Capt. Jack Bradley, Jr., M.A.C., 1st Lt. Thomas S. Long, M.C., 2nd Lt. Jessie Wallace, H.D., Pvt. Timothy B. Mansell, Pfc. Cary W. Kinlaw, Pfc. David Lipschultz, Pfc. Garfield Lucas, Pfc. Vincent D. McClafferty, Pfc. Ralph V. McClanahan, Pfc. Chester E. Provost, Pfc. Dillard Robertson, Pfc. Anthony J. Snyder, and Pfc. Amos C. Van Gordon.

JANUARY, 1945:

1st Lt. Dorothy L. Goodale, A.N.C.

LEFT THE UNIT

OCTOBER, 1944:

Pfc. Arthur D. Lackey to the hospital.

NOVEMBER, 1944:

Capt. George L. Ashley to 3rd Aux. Surg. Group; 2nd Lt. Frances L. Lake to the 28th Gen. Hosp.; Pvt. Carl G. Culver to the 76th Gen. Hosp.; Pfc. Leo B. Kennedy to Central Records BN, Casual Div.; T/5 William F. Kunze and T/4 William Stackpool to the hospital; Pvt. Harold Martin and Pfc. Louis Scaturro to the 15th Gen. Hosp.; Pvt. James A. McDonald to Central Records BN, Casual Div.

DECEMBER, 1944:

Capt. John Bowser to the 58th Gen. Hosp.; 2nd Lt. Clara M. Dambach to the hospital; T/5 Orville Crawford, Pvt. Lonnie F. Gales, Pfc. Gerald E. Gevock, Pvt. Carl Jones, Pvt. Emith G. Kerns, Pvt. Homer D. Seitz, and Pfc. George S. Shaw to the

16th Replacement Depot; Pvt. John S. Crean to the 325th Glider Inf.; Pvt. Eugene H. Dubeau to the 707 MP. BN., Comz; T/3 Robert J. Gerlach to the 1559 Labor Sup. Co.; Pvt. Ashpy Hedger and Broadway Jones to the 262nd Inf.; Pfc. Raymond O. Pead to the 121st Inf.-Med. Det.; T/Sgt. James L. Sale to the hospital.

LA LOUVIERE PROMOTIONS AND COMMISSIONS

JANUARY, 1945:

TO MAJOR—Max S. Allen.

FEBRUARY, 1945:

TO 1ST LT., A.N.C.—Dorothy D. Downs, Mary A. Ewing, Elizabeth C. McGrogan, Marie Paik, Irene Rohr, Clio E. Shirley, Margaret E. St. John, and Josephine R. Zeman.

TO 2ND LT., M.A.C.—John W. Clason, Ormand F. Cook, James E. Cover, Reid L. Cox, Keith H. Gibbs, John T. Greco, Walter L. Mason, James E. Maye, and Roland B. Stotter.

FEBRUARY, 1945:

TO 1ST LT., A.N.C.—Helen E. Bailey, Esther A. Curphey, Letha M. Dark, Gladys R. Fitzgerald, Mary A. Gogel, Virginia R. McIntosh, Elizabeth J. Hagins, Marie A. Heine, Lillian M. Hoch, Frances R. Holt, Thelma M. Keough, Violet R. Mahan, and Mae I. Ramsay.

TO TECHNICAL SERGEANT—John J. McDermott.

TO TECHNICIAN 5TH GRADE—Fred J. Klepfel and Lawrence J. Maney.

MARCH, 1945:

TO MAJOR—Paul R. Harrington.

TO CAPTAIN—Sidney Druce and Ellsworth A. Frederick.

TO 1ST LT., A.N.C.—Louise Gilliland, Mary E. Kempster, Sarah C. Leach, Gladys C. Perdue, Elvira L. Peterson, Beverly R. Wiggins, and Mary E. Ziroff.

TO STAFF SERGEANT—Virgil D. Jakeway, Maurice M. McQuiddy, Earl C. Modrall, and Edward E. Ryan.

TO TECHNICIAN 4TH GRADE—Lamon W. Bethune, Glenn A. Chaloupka, David Grimes, John E. Russ, Kenneth F. Smith, Henry Turnbull, and Yong F. Yee.

TO TECHNICIAN 5TH GRADE—Arthur F. Belote, Chester N. Brown, Eugene Carver, Walter W. Chappell, Paul E. Erb, Kenneth J. Kohlwaies, Bernard J. Letteau, Oscar E. Nelson, John W. Penko, Stanley J. Pilch, Lacy M. Pittman, Thomas H. Russell, Tom Smith and Froy Talley.

JOINED THE UNIT

FEBRUARY, 1945:

Capt. Ralph A. Arnold, M.C., Capt. Philip J. De Mar, D.C., and Pvt. John S. Foster.

MARCH, 1945:

2nd Lt. Evelyn M. Orth, A.N.C., an Louise E. Seymour, A.R.C.; Pvt. John S. Kocsis and Pvt. George Pennington.

LEFT THE UNIT

JANUARY, 1945:

Capt. William I. Gautschi, D.C. and 1st Lt. Thomas S. Long to the hospital; Maj. Edwin S. Wright to 114th Gen. Hosp.

FEBRUARY, 1945:

Capt. Oren D. Boyce to the hospital; 2nd Lt. John W. Clason to the 100th Gen. Hosp.; 2nd Lt. Orman F. Cook to the 58th Gen. Hosp.; 2nd Lt. James E. Cover to the 12th Field Hosp.; 2nd Lt. Reid L. Cox to the 298th Gen. Hosp.; 2nd Lt. Keith H. Gibbs to the 428th Med. Bn.; 2nd Lt. John T. Greco to the 9th Field Hosp.; 2nd Lt. Walter L. Mason to ADSZ Hdqs.; 2nd Lt. James E. Maye to the 130th Gen. Hosp.; Roland B. Stotter to the 16th Gen. Hosp.; 2nd Lt. Violet R. Mahan to the States; Pfc. William J. Agee to the 3124 Q.M. Repair Team; Sgt. Bernard Colbert, T/5 Frank Denaro, T/5 Horace C. Harrell, Pfc. Joseph T. Schmidt, and Cpl. Joseph A. Uzas, to the 6960 Reinforcement Depot; T/5 George M. Haire to the States.

MARCH, 1945:

Capt. Ira P. Burdine, Pfc. Theodore Bright and Pfc. Mesrob Kaloustain to the hospital; Capt. Nihil K. Venis, Capt. Walter R. Floyd and Capt. Leslie B. Williams to the States.



Chapter IX

MUNCHEN-GLADBACH was a large factory town which had been thoroughly bombed by both the British and the U. S. planes, and had received concentrated shelling during the advance to the Rhine. It was said that the British in particular had bombed this town in retaliation for the Coventry raids. The town appeared to be about 100,000 population in size, although the majority



DESTRUCTION IN MUNCHEN-GLADBACH

of the inhabitants had retreated before the Allied attack. In the factory district and the business section, there was not a single building that had not been hit or had a near hit,

so that the damage was great in every instance. Not a single window was intact, and few buildings had four walls standing. In the residential areas the damage was much less, but as factories were scattered throughout the town, there was still considerable destruction even in these districts.

The site selected for the erection of the 77th was a large flat field about 150 yards wide and 500 yards long. It was on a crest a little higher than the surrounding area, and to the south where there were no buildings to interfere, the view was unrestricted for over a mile, looking out over the valley on street after street of tumbled buildings and littered ground. On the northern side of the hospital area the field continued for two hundred yards where there were buildings at the edge of the outlying business district. On the eastern edge of the area were a large group of red brick, four-story buildings. This had been a hos-



MILITARY TRAFFIC THROUGH THE RUBLE IN THE STREETS OF MUNCHEN-GLADBACH

pital for the insane, but in the last stages of the campaign, had been damaged considerably so that it was untenable by the 77th. On the western edge, a long, low factory building was standing. This had been an electrical ma-



VIEW OF THE HOSPITAL AREA TAKEN FROM THE TOWER

chine parts factory and had also been severely damaged. On the northern end of the factory was a high tower, and when the 77th arrived here, a white flag of surrender was still flying. This was soon replaced by a flag showing

"77th E. H.", the tower having been climbed with considerable respect for the possibility of booby traps, and thereafter placed strictly out of bounds.

As usual, the engineers were called in soon after the advance party arrived, and before the main group came to Munchen-Gladbach, well drained roads had been scraped out. In this job, the engineers were only well



THE LAUNDRY UNIT

started when they were called out on an urgent mission near the Rhine, and it was several days before they returned to complete the roads. A group of men of the 77th were then set to work hauling gravel for the roads. The advance party had staked out the entire area in the procedure which had now become well standardized. A wide road was built along the northern and western edges of the area. From the entrance on the east side a curved



THE OFFICERS' AREA

side road, also quite wide, led down in front of Headquarters row and then back to the main road. The secondary roads were built between the various sections of the hospital. At the entrance to the area the attached laundry unit was given space beside a small house which they used for quarters. Just to the left of the entrance the motor pool was located. Between this and the first row of hospital tents, the officers' area was set up, with the pyramidal tents erected in two rows of seven each, facing a central path. The main hospital area was divided as usual into four sections. In the first, the seven medical wards were set up, with medical headquarters, nurses'

ward and isolation ward in the center. The central section was given over to the Red Cross tent, receiving tent, pharmacy and laboratory, reclothing, storage for evacuation and for medical wards, the x-ray department, electricians' tent and generators, patients' mess and mess storage. The last two sections in the main area were the surgical wards, surgical headquarters, minor surgery, and operating room section. At the southern end of the medical row the nurses' tents were set up, with the mess and recreation tent in the southeastern corner of the area. Next in the row was the supply section, then the E. M. mess, theatre, with the shower behind this. In the southwestern corner of the camp was the enlisted men's area and recreation tent.

The advance detail had carried much of the new canvas, and they were busy erecting these tents when the main body of the organization arrived. After this, the work went rapidly forward. All functioning sections of the hospital were made completely ready and the living quarters then made more comfortable. Work was then carried out on the added features which, although not essential, had become very much a part of each set-up. Signs were painted and erected for complete identification of the various departments, wards and sections. White streamers were placed around each tent, tied to the tent stakes, so that



THE CENTRAL SECTION OF THE HOSPITAL

walking in the blackout would be less hazardous. To aid the ambulance drivers, the roads were lined by rocks which were whitewashed. Dimly lighted signs were placed at the entrance and at the receiving tent to guide the ambulance drivers as they arrived. The electricians continued their work and for the first time, lights were put up in the enlisted men's quarters. As time permitted, the theater tent was erected, with large boards used as scaffolding to brace the tent securely; recreation tents were put up for the officers and nurses and for the enlisted men.

Much of the material which was used was obtained in the town from the factories, after permission from the Military Government officials had been secured. A flak tower not far from the hospital had not been completed, and a wealth of material was obtained from this. Under the able direction of Sgt. Ken McConnell, gravel, concrete, stone blocks, bricks and boards were removed and brought to the hospital. Another factory not far from the hospital was the largest electric motor plant in Germany, and wire and other materials for use by the electric department was obtained here. A large cable factory was also found, and this supplied wire for not only the 77th

but many other units of the Army as well. It was felt that the majority of this material had been used or was to be used in the war against the Allies and, with its capture, it was only right that the material should be used in the construction of a hospital for the care of sick and wounded, both Allied and enemy.

Little has been said about the German people who had remained behind as their troops retreated. After the 77th had arrived in Munchen-Gladbach there were more and more people seen on the streets during the day, and whereas a civilian was seen only occasionally early in the stay here, they gradually increased in number. They contrasted markedly with the friendly Belgian people who had been left behind, but this was to be expected. They all appeared well nourished, and their clothing was good, although it was apparent that they were wearing only working clothes. It was difficult to describe any particular attitude; any attempt at friendliness was rarely noted at this time. For the most part, they remained with solemn, essentially expressionless faces, always avoiding looking one directly in the face. In some there was a hint of humiliation, occasionally fear, and perhaps disgust or shame; but there was never noted anything which might remotely resemble guilt for the war and subsequent suffering which had occurred. For the most part, these people remained in whatever was left of their homes, faring as best they could, for essentially all business had stopped. An occasional trip to the stores as their reopening was permitted was their only task. The Military Government was reasonably lenient, allowing them to go about town practically at will during the daylight hours. Trips out of town could not be made without permission. Stores and shops could be reopened only with permission of the Military Government officials.

The hospital was now completely set up and awaiting the arrival of patients. The 17th Airbourne Division jumped near Wesel on March 4. The hospital was officially opened and the first patient received on Sunday, March 25. On the following day the patients arrived in greater numbers, many having received only the treatment

given at the battalion aid stations. These men had been well triaged, however, so for the most part they had relatively minor wounds, as the severely wounded had been taken out of the chain of evacuation in the more forward field and evacuation hospitals. From the 26th of March to the 7th of April an average of about 400 patients were received daily, and once again the hospital was on a twenty-four hour working schedule. After the long period of rest, the work was more than welcome. During the sixteen-day period of greatest activity 7,143 patients were admitted. The character of the admissions then began changing, as fewer and fewer of the Allied troops were seen, and more and more German prisoner of war patients were brought in. This was, of course, a very encouraging sign.

There was reason for optimism. At the beginning of April, the entire defense of the Germans had begun to disintegrate, and the Allies rushed ahead with growing momentum. The Ruhr pocket was isolated and gradually mopped up, with well over 300,000 prisoners resulting. The Russians continued to hammer at Berlin and to advance on all their fronts. The Allies drove forward, and every issue of the *Stars and Stripes* carried announcements of fabulous gains. The German communications were interrupted, and their men surrendered in droves. Isolated pockets put up desperate resistance, and men were lost cleaning them out, but the overall advance continued. On April 25, the Russian-American link-up took place at Torgau on the Elbe River. Munich fell on May 1, Berlin fell, Salzburg fell, Hamburg fell. The Nazis surrendered in Italy. Von Rundstedt was captured. All forces in Holland, Denmark and northern Germany surrendered. And on midnight of May 8 it was officially over.

To go back to the 77th, after the crossings of the Rhine had been completed and more and more material taken across, the admission rate dropped sharply. Unknown to the common file, the airfields on the other side of the Rhine were evacuating the wounded directly to general hospitals in the rear, by-passing the evacuation units. But with the decline in admissions, more and more prisoners



THE ITALIAN 8040 SANITARY COMPANY

were received. Every night and frequently during the day, the artillery barrages could be heard as the Allies shelled the enemy across the Rhine, now hopelessly trapped in the Ruhr pocket, and every night the RAF bombers passed overhead on their way to bomb the troops in the industrial Ruhr. At first many of the prisoners received were from this pocket. These men had been cut off for days, their units shot to pieces, without hope of reinforcement. Many of them had been wounded days before, and received little or no medical treatment. Their wounds had



WAR PRISONERS WERE PLACED IN LARGE BARBED WIRE ENCAMPMENTS

become infected, and irreparable damage done. These patients all required more treatment, not only because of the complications which had developed in their wounds but because of their poor nutritional state.

At about this time, the sanitary company of colored soldiers were ordered to another location. These men had worked very hard and performed an excellent job during their stay with the 77th. The officers had long been a part of the unit, and they too were missed. Their place was taken by the 8040 Sanitary Company. These men were Italians, the majority of whom had been captured during the North African campaign. In the months since that time, they had been in prisoner of war camps in England. The prisoners who expressed a willingness to perform non-combatant tasks were organized into companies and trained for various missions. This particular group had been trained in England, and were sent to the 77th to act as litter bearers and to perform other tasks which required no complicated training.

On April 30, the electric department developed trouble and the diesel unit had to be salvaged. In the twelve months this generator had been operational, it gave 5,833 hours of practically trouble-free service, consuming only 8,336 gallons of fuel, an average of less than one and one-half gallons per hour. The crankcase oil was changed 167 times, or about once every 35 hours, although at Ste. Mere Eglise it was necessary to run for 181 consecutive hours without an oil change. This reflected the material and workmanship in the unit; but exemplified even more the excellent care the electricians gave the electrical units.

In the latter part of April, it became obvious that there were to be many prisoner patients, and that additional facilities were needed for their care. Prisoner of war cages were being set up with all possible speed in several locations not far from the hospital, and word was received

that the 77th would take patients from these cages. As there were few Allied patients, all the wards except four of those on the Medical Service were used for prisoners. Even this proved to be entirely inadequate. At Rhineberg, about twenty miles from Munchen-Gladbach, one of the largest cages was set up. This grew by leaps and bounds; and the first estimate of the number of prisoners to be handled was repeatedly revised upward, the cage finally holding about 160,000 prisoners. Thousands came into the cages daily, and thousands were sent to other POW camps in France and Belgium. The men coming in were from every branch of the German forces: SS men, Wehrmacht, Volksturm, Hitler Youth and civilians. These men had been fighting a losing battle, and for some of them, their supply lines had been cut for days. Continuous fighting on short rations showed in their thin, worn faces. Hitler had definitely scraped the bottom of the barrel, which was so plainly seen by the representation of cripples, some actually walking with the aid of crutches, the aged, the adolescent boys, partially blind or deaf and many others who were obviously unfit for any type of military duty. Many of them had been taken from tuberculosis sanatoria, so that all stages of relapse and healing were seen. A number of patients with far advanced can-



LIVING TENTS WERE LATER ERECTED FOR PRISONERS OF WAR

cer were picked up after they had been hospitalized. The release of hundreds from the insane asylums of Germany in a desperate effort to slow the Allied advance further complicated the dejected picture.

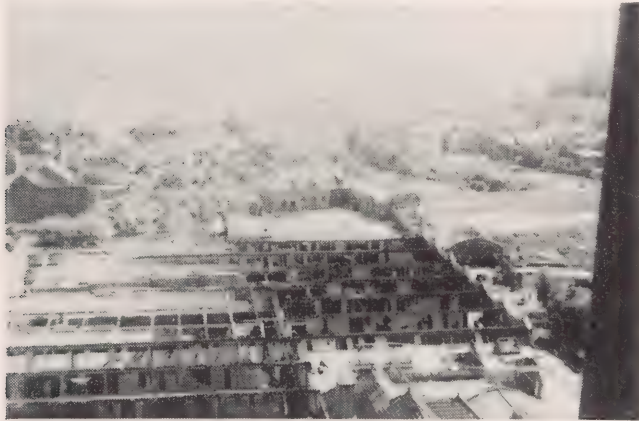
Hospital facilities were badly needed for these men, and the civilian hospitals were of little or no value. The 9th Field Hospital had been set up and was functioning at the cage at Rhineberg, but this relatively small organization was unable to cope with such a deluge of patients. At this time, the 77th received orders to prepare to receive 2,000 prisoner of war patients and was given no time to prepare for the vanguard of several hundred which arrived about April 28.

Four wards were set aside for the hospitalization of Allied troops in the vicinity of the 77th, and the remaining wards were all used for the prisoners. In spite of roughly 500 beds which were thus available, much more bed capacity was needed quickly, and so the partially demolished factory at the edge of the hospital site was used to house about 1,200 patients. This change from a wrecked factory to a satisfactory hospital did not come about without

MEDICINE UNDER CANVAS

considerable hard work which had to be accomplished rapidly. In one sector of the factory the floor of the second story was reasonably intact, and with some repair, would serve as a roof for the first floor. It was decided to use this first floor space and the basement beneath it as wards for the prisoner patients.

Lt. Hoard had been sent back to England for some special equipment which was badly needed, and Capt. John



THE BOMBED FACTORY USED TO HOSPITALIZE GERMAN PRISONER PATIENTS

Shellito had been appointed as the temporary supply officer. So to him fell the difficult task of securing supplies and equipment of specialized nature from sources which were non-existent, and he was allowed a matter of hours to do this. The speed with which the wrecked shambles of the factory became a reasonably well equipped, smoothly functioning unit of the hospital was a testimony to his efficiency and improvisation and a tribute to all the members of the unit who worked with him.

In the basement, the first part of the unit was set up. The personnel of the 77th, the Italian Cooperatives of the Sanitary Company and later German POW labor were all employed in the cleaning of the building. The basement had been used as a storage room for cabbage, much of which had decomposed, and no amount of scrubbing would completely remove the rather penetrating smell. Litters and cots which were excess in the unit supply and any others which could be borrowed, were set up, and there were sufficient blankets to place two on each bed. From the numerous vacant homes, stores and factories near the hospital, tables, chairs, cabinets, dishes and other necessary utensils were obtained. The manner of obtaining this equipment was interesting, in that the arrangement was such that the owner was properly paid. For example, several large stoves were needed for cooking and dish washing. Suitable stoves were available in the basement of nearly every home. A truck with an officer in charge was sent out to collect these. If the owner could be found, he was given a receipt for his stove. This he took to the burgemeister, who paid him the full value from town funds. Theoretically, when the unit left town, the stoves were returned and the money returned to the town treasury.

A temporary hospital unit was finally arranged and the patients were received. Meanwhile, work was started on another larger section. Single, double, and triple deck beds were built and equipped with straw ticks and two

blankets. The frames for the beds were obtained from local lumber yards. The mattress covers for the ticks were obtained by Capt. Shellito after some clever diplomacy involving the British who had taken over a mattress factory in the British zone. Newly woven blankets



KITCHEN AND CHOW LINE FOR GERMAN PRISONERS

were obtained in a much similar manner; the Germans always being more willing to work when they realized that the material was to be used for their own wounded.

After the framework had been established and the unit was functioning well, a requisition was sent to the cage at Rhineberg, and a complete staff of Germans obtained. This included medical officers who paralleled those of



RECEIVING ENTRANCE FOR THE GERMAN PRISONER PATIENTS

the 77th's organization: a commanding officer, adjutant, surgical and medical staffs and administrative officers. The enlisted personnel were for the most part specialists, such as aid men, laboratory technicians, medical and surgical corpsmen, plumbers, cooks, electricians, clerks and the other necessary personnel. The nurses of the 77th were relieved as soon as the first of the workers were received from the cage, and the German staff was gradually allowed to assume complete charge of their unit, although they were always under constant supervision, from the commanding officer down to the laboring private.

Gradually more equipment was received from German supply dumps and factories. A small building was com-

pletely equipped to serve as the kitchen. Showers were installed, a laundry was functioning and an officer's mess was established. The receiving ward for this unit was entirely separate, and was manned by the Germans, who enthusiastically deloused their comrades with the potent DDT. A laboratory, clothing exchange, dental clinic and chapel were established. Both a Catholic and Protestant chaplain were found in the POW cage and brought to supervise and conduct services. No radios were permitted, but Information and Education Branch furnished selected articles from the *Stars and Stripes*. Since nearly all of the first groups of patients were suffering from diarrhea, bouillon and tea was the only diet which they could tolerate. As they improved, more food was obtained and they were adequately fed. They were at first not given tobacco, as this was difficult to obtain, but later pipe tobacco was issued to them. In comparison to the cages where they had to be kept during this period, the hospital was a paradise, and numerous prisoners begged to be kept as workers after they had recovered. Although the days were warm, the nights were cold and rain was frequent, so that they appreciated being able to lie down in a clean bed in a warm building.

At intervals during the day, and frequently during the night, the six-by-six trucks rolled up to the POW receiving tent to dispose of the filthy and usually quite ill patients. Each truck carried back to the cage any of the patients who had recovered. For a short time the admission rate was quite high, and on one day there were 692 admissions. During the month they functioned, under the supervision of the 77th, 6,083 patients were admitted and there were seventy-two deaths. From one of the reports submitted by the German colonel in charge, a fairly clear idea of the type of patients may be obtained. The following is copied as it was submitted:

Tonsillitis	14	Hepatitis	37	Cholelithiasis	2
Sunstroke	5	Diarrhea	893	Pleuritis	35
Parotitis		Diphtherie	31	Bronchial	
epidemic	1	Myocarditis	14	Asthma	30
Ileus	2	Silicosis	2	Nephritis	129
Thyreotoxiosis	2	Dysenterie	1,461	Encephalitis	2
Helminthiasis	1	Pneumonie	536	Cystitis	30
Malaria	1	Heart trouble	69	Sciatica	13
Psychose	25	Inanition	65	Meningitis	1
Epilepsie	27	Ulcer of the		Angina pectoris	6
Gastro-		Stomach and		Febris	
Enteritis	157	Duodenum	146	Wohlhynica	2
Paralysis	4	Pulmonary tbc	420	Cholecystitis	7
Scarlet fever	1	Bronchitis	54	Urethritis	1
Scabies	2	Nephrolithiasis	11	Polyneuritis	4
Neurosis	20	Diabetes	16	Anaemia	4
Influenza	6	Rheumatisme	97	Colitis	2
Cardeac insufficiency	281				

Just as this unit had been completely organized and was functioning satisfactorily, the 77th was ordered to find a building and prepare it to receive 1,500 additional patients. The Stadthalle, located in the adjoining town of Rheydt, and about two miles from the location of the 77th, was selected as the most ideal place which was readily available. This was a relatively new, six-story structure, which had apparently been built during the more constructive period of the Hitler regime. It was a community theatre center, and the construction showed that great thought and care had gone into the planning and construction of the building in order that it might exactly fit the specified purpose. On the first floor was a large foyer,

with small offices for the officials, offices with windows for ticket sales, restaurant and check rooms. The main room was a large theater with a stage off which were numerous dressing rooms. On the other floors were located large lecture rooms, and a number of smaller rooms



"STADTHALLE" USED AS A HOSPITAL FOR PRISONERS

on the order of classrooms. There were large dining halls and one large ballroom. Offices, sitting rooms and living quarters were located on several of the floors.

The building was strongly constructed, with steel girders, brick and concrete, so that while it had not suffered a direct hit in the bombing, the near misses had caused little damage and the building could be repaired sufficiently for use. The plumbing and sanitary facilities, while quite adequate for the contemplated purposes, were in a bad state of repair and needed much work and a number of replacements. Most of the windows had been blown out and the roof leaked badly. The blast from the bombs had cracked the plaster all over the building, so that every room was littered with debris of wood, glass, plaster and bricks. One bomb, apparently much closer than the others, had caved in a part of the roof directly over the stairway on one side, and this was entirely beyond repair. The building had been used by the U.S. Army 8th Medical Depot, but this organization had only cleaned out a small section of the first floor which they needed. Therefore, a tremendous amount of work had to be done before patients could be admitted here. In addition, the supply facilities of the hospital had already been stretched beyond the breaking point by the added load already imposed by the additional beds which had been installed in the factory near the hospital site. From some source, a large quantity of equipment had to be secured rapidly.

The following officers were appointed to set up the new unit, or as it was soon called, the 77th's Annex: Maj. Martin F. Anderson, Capt. Robert L. Newman, Capt. Paul E. Bennett, Capt. Walter Olszewski, Capt. John Shellito and Lt. Marvin Bowers. In addition Capt. E. A. Weller of the 197th General Hospital, and Lt. Max Painter and Lt. Harold McDonald of the 228th General Hospital were sent as a team to aid in the construction. The latter brought with them a group of enlisted men to help, and from the 77th a group of men under the direction of Sgt. Ken McConnell were sent to the Annex on detached service. A German medical detachment of 19 medical officers and 213 enlisted men was requisitioned from the cage, and this latter group was fully utilized in performing the actual labor.

During the ten days which the group was allowed to

prepare for the first patients, the following had to be done: the entire building and grounds were thoroughly cleaned, the existing roads were repaired and additional roads marked out and constructed, a barbed wire enclosure was built, a kitchen, complete with stoves, cauldrons, water, utensils, dishes and other accessories capable of feeding 2,000 personnel was installed, the water pipes, toilets and other sanitary facilities were replaced or repaired, a twenty-four-head shower complete with hot water regulating valves was installed, 850 double decker wooden bunks were assembled and provided with 1,700 mattresses, which had to be constructed, and an improvised laundry was set up. Space was designated for the various departments and adequate medical and general supplies secured and brought in.

Fortunately, with the improvement in the weather and other factors, admissions were not as great as anticipated. Nevertheless, during the 27 days the Annex functioned under the supervision of the 77th, there were admitted 3,049 patients. 1,598 were returned to the stockades, 21 died, 31 were transferred to the unit in Munchen-Gladbach, and 1,399 were turned over to the British when they took over the hospital. The speed and efficiency with which the Annex was organized and equipped, and the excellent manner in which it was conducted were a tribute to the officers and men who performed these tasks.

During the first week in May the rumors of the surrender of Germany gradually gained in intensity and truth. The final announcement did not come as a sudden surprise, but drifted in in small doses. At last the official news came that the formal surrender would take place at Rheims, and the "cease fire" order was to be given at 0001 hours on May 9, which was to be the official V-E Day. During the evening of May 8 there were no unusual celebrations, and when midnight came, there was little to mark the end of the long and costly war. Several sirens were sounded, a number of flares brightened the sky, and a few scattered shots were heard. There were no parties, no drunks, no whooping and shouting. A few quietly pulled out the bottles they had saved for this occasion, but the drinks were taken rather solemnly. Everyone realized that there was still a war to be won in the Pacific. The following day there was still little change. Probably the most noticeable change, at least outwardly, was that helmets were no longer worn, and the orders rescinding this regulation permitted the wearing of overseas caps. On the evening of V-E Day, the German detachment was brought out in formation, led by their officers, and in a formal ceremony, the official announcement of the end of the war and the defeat of their country was read to them.

Despite the slow changes, there were many noticeable differences after the war had ended. The blackout restrictions were lifted, and for the first time in many months one had no difficulty in getting about the area on a dark night. Two wards were all that were required to take care of the patients which were received from units in the surrounding territory. This required very little work, and as the officers took turns in serving as professional officer of the day, much leisure time became available. Numerous activities, both previously planned and extemporaneously organized, became the order of the day. For the staff of *Medicine Under Canvas* it meant getting down to work, and the personnel were assigned as primary duty the compilation of this account.

The Information and Education program, under the di-

rection of Maj. Morris S. Harless, now began functioning fully in all its ramifications. The weekly orientation lectures were continued. An added feature was a summary of the week's news, from the European front by Capt. John Shellito, and from the Pacific area by Lt. Stewart P. Barden. The point system for discharge from the Army, and the classification system for the redistribution of units were announced. Soon large posters explaining these two important announcements so vital to all were on display in several areas. From this time until his discharge from the Army, these two regulations and how they affected him were the most discussed and thought about subjects any soldier had during his army career. The point system was relatively simple, and as the majority of the men and women in the 77th had been overseas for nearly three years, sounded like a very favorable idea. One point was allowed for each month in the Army, with an additional point for each month spent overseas; five points were given for each decoration or battle star, and twelve points for each child. Practically every original member of the unit had above 90 points, many had more than 100 points, and the unit still had two more campaign stars to be awarded. In an army of about 8,000,000 with only a part of this army in the European theater, there could not be too many men who had more points than this.

The reclassification and redeployment was a different matter. The units were to be inspected and placed in one of four classifications; the first was to remain in the Army of Occupation, the second to be sent either directly or indirectly to the Pacific area, the third to be returned to the States, and the fourth to be broken up and the personnel to be assigned to one of the units in the first three classes. Numerous sources indicated that the major share of the shipping would be utilized to speed troops and material to the Pacific, and the road home might be long and slow, with numerous delays and long periods of waiting. The rumors soon had it that the actual designation of the order in which the hospital units would be sent home had been established, and while the 77th was not far down the list, the appointed time was still months away. Again the rumors were quite different, and the 77th was in and out of each class several times a day.

The information provided by the I & E section concerning the point and redeployment systems was not the only function of the section. A small but well chosen library was made available and comfortable chairs, tables and lights were fixed in the I & E tent. A large number of courses were to be offered, and the teachers of these courses received their preliminary instructions in a series of lectures by members of the I & E staff.

The usual recreation tents for the officers and nurses and for the enlisted men had been set up, but now that there were few patients to be cared for much more time and attention could be given to these areas. The majority of the actual work was done by the Italian Cooperatives, but the men in charge did an excellent job in making the tents attractive and comfortable. A bar had always been present in both tents, and this was now made more elaborate. Beer and cognac, and occasionally wine, was available. In the enlisted men's recreation tent a number of large tables were available, along with comfortable chairs and several sofas. The "gaming table" was still in evidence. Chairs and small tables were placed outside.

The officers' and nurses' tent had a concrete floor put

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in and a white fence was built around part of this area. On one side a number of chairs and small tables were placed, with large beach umbrellas to provide shade. Tables, chairs, sofas, radio, piano and books were secured and placed in the tent.

This arrangement was greatly appreciated when May 17 came and it was time for the Birthday Party, celebrating the activation of the 77th. As the unit had been organized in 1942, this was the third birthday, all three having been celebrated overseas. With the European war over, it seemed like the ideal time for a big celebration. The officers, nurses and enlisted men who planned and worked so hard to make these parties a success received a great deal of both spoken and silent gratitude. The party began about five in the evening, and everyone made an effort to attend in Class A uniform, or the equivalent. The drinks were free, and were liberally poured, the bar having been set up in a small tent erected near the main recreation tent. The main tent had been cleared of furniture, and long tables from a mess tent were set up. As with every occasion of this sort, a speakers' table faced the four long tables in the main part of the tent. The dinner was truly special, and was served in a more or less formal manner.

After the dinner, speeches were given by various members of the unit. The highlight of this period was the talk made by the commanding officer, in which he repeated the statement which all had heard, and which many believed and all hoped to be true: "The 77th is the damn best hospital in the ETO." The dinner and the speeches over, the tables were cleared away and the floor liberally sprinkled with powdered wax for dancing. An orchestra had been hired from an ordnance outfit close by, and they played well into the night.

Maj. Paul Harrington, as a member of the staff of the I & E section had been placed in charge of the athletic program, and during the period of waiting after the war, had organized and supervised a very extensive schedule. A baseball diamond for both soft and hard ball was constructed. Bleachers with protective wire were erected. In the unit, a league of eight teams was organized and played a complete schedule. A basketball court was set up and fully utilized; two volley ball courts were built, along with a badminton court and several horseshoe pitching ranges. All these facilities were fully utilized by

members of the unit. In addition, permission to use the swimming pool and tennis courts at one of the local clubs was secured, and this too provided many hours of excellent recreation.

Baseball games were played with teams from other units in the vicinity, but perhaps the most outstanding accomplishment was the manner in which a "Field Day" between the 77th and the 610th Ordnance was carried out. The following is quoted from *Snow Job*, the newspaper of the 610th Ordnance: "In a closely contested athletic meet Sunday afternoon the 610th Ordnance Battalion de-



THE BASEBALL DIAMOND AT MUNCHEN-GLADBACH

feated the 77th Evacuation Hospital by the score of 145 to 133. The difference in points in no way tells the true facts of the meet, for the victory was not decided until the last event of the meet had been completed. The competition was keen throughout and no contestant was an easy winner, except in the diving where Maj. Paul Harrington of the 77th far outclassed the field with his near perfect executions of beautiful dives.

"The times and distances covered by the entries were exceptionally good considering the physical condition of the athletes and the years that had elapsed since their active participation in the various sports. Not only did the contestants enjoy donning the spikes and the suits again, but the fans who attended spent an enjoyable day witnessing the activities. The scheduled program of Track and Field, Softball, Baseball, Swimming and Div-



OFFICERS' AND NURSES' RECREATION AREA AT MUNCHEN-GLADBACH

ing was carried out in a clock-like fashion holding the interest of all."

In addition to the actual athletic contests which took place during the day, two excellent meals were served. Lunch was provided for both units by the 77th, and dinner was prepared and served by the men of the 610th. The latter was served on the roof garden of the large bathhouse at the Olympic Pool where the swimming and diving contests were held. This was an exceedingly pleasant setting, the site being well away from the town and in a heavily wooded area. A large artificial lake stretched out behind the bathhouse, with the pool and the bleachers for spectators in front.

Not all members of the 77th were inclined to so much activity so that in the early days of spring, the major and most strenuous activity was sunbathing. Further recreational facilities were provided when a card tent was set up for the officers. This also served the more practical purpose as the ironing tent for the nurses during the day, but at night the usual game was in progress.

To provide more extensive opportunities for travel after the war had ended, orders came down establishing an exceedingly lenient policy regarding passes and furloughs. The number of men permitted to each point was necessarily limited at any one time, but there were few who did not see a part of Europe other than that covered on their official travels. Trips to England and Paris, while a bit more difficult to obtain, were nevertheless accomplished by a goodly number. There were almost daily trips to

Verviers, La Louviere, Brussels and other nearby points. One more privileged group toured southern Germany in the discomfort of a jeep. They came back to describe the beauties of the mountain and lake districts, but perhaps the most impressive part of their trip was their visit to Hitler's famed Berchtesgaden. A number of trips were made by the medical officers to Solingen, one of the largest surgical instrument manufacturing centers in Germany. The factories were not working, but clerks were at the storerooms, and by obtaining permissions from the Military Government authorities, one might purchase all types of finely made surgical instruments at about one-eighth the cost in the States.

Just at the end of the war, the first group of eight men and one officer left for the Riviera, where they remained seven days. These were followed later by other groups of men, usually accompanied by an officer. Later arrangements were made whereby the nurses were permitted similar trips and a number had very fine vacations. From the first group who made the trip, some of the details may be recorded. The trip was made by train, with the usual rickety third class coaches and hard wood benches. At Cannes, the officer left the train to go to the vacation center which had been set up for the officers—not to free the officers from the men, but to free the men from the officers. The group finally arrived at Nice, just in time to help celebrate the official end of the war. The men were housed in one of the luxury hotels of the area. Each hotel had a night club complete with floor show. The

HIGHLIGHTS OF FIELD DAY, GERMANY 1945



1) SOFTBALL GAME: Umpire—Capt. J. Werner, Catcher—Philo, Batter—J. Whelan. 2) 40-YARD RELAY: 1st place—Murphy, 2nd place—W. Belton. 3) DIVING: 1st place—J. Kowalski. 4) SWIMMING: 1st place—W. Belton, 2nd place—F. Whelan. 5) LOW HURDLES: 1st place—W. Belton, 2nd place—F. Whelan. 6) CO-DIRECTOR AND SCORE KEEPER: A. Lindenberg. 7) SOFTBALL: 1st place—W. Belton, 2nd place—F. Whelan. 8) 10-YARD DASH: 1st place—W. Belton, 2nd place—F. Whelan. 9) SHOT PUT: 1st place—W. Belton, 2nd place—F. Whelan. 10) HIGH JUMP: 1st place—W. Belton, 2nd place—F. Whelan. 11) HIGH DIVING: E. Pridmore. 12) 50-YARD DASH AWARD: 1st place—W. Belton, 2nd place—F. Whelan. Photos Courtesy of Lt. Col. Keller

favorite was probably the famous Raynauld's, located on the Quai des États-Unis. Many other recreational facilities were available, such as tennis, swimming, aquatics, bicycling, opera and the theater. Organized tours were conducted every day to points of interest in and near the city. While at the rest area, the cost was 100 francs, plus



THE FIRST GROUP OF MEN ORDERED TO THE UNITED STATES

whatever the individual chose to spend for drinks, this fee covering the cost of the hotel room and three meals daily. The men were allowed to do exactly as they pleased, and the area was strictly "Off Limits" to officers.

During the early period after the end of the war, there were the constantly changing rumors, as mentioned before, of the status of the unit and each individual in re-



THE FIRST GROUP OF HAPPY HOMEWARD BOUND MEN
gard to the possibility of going home. Transfers soon gave weight to the rumor that the unit might be on the way home. Low point men, nurses and officers were transferred from the unit and replacements who were re-

ceived were all high pointers. Finally the long awaited order arrived; not all were going home, but the concrete fact that some were going indicated to everyone that his or her turn would soon come. All men with 102 points or more were ordered to turn in their equipment and prepare for return to the States. A flurry of activity began, with the office of Capt. Fredericks as the center, for here many detailed papers had to be made out in proper manner. A single mistake might mean a man turned back at the port of embarkation. The men, too, were busy, ridding themselves of their excess property, turning in equipment and packing what was to be taken along. The sudden order to return home put at least one man in a very indecisive position. T/4 Charles W. Vicario had been engaged to one of the very lovely young ladies in La Louviere, and had been planning a marriage later in the spring. With such a short time remaining before leaving, it appeared that he would either have to postpone his marriage indefinitely, or withdraw from the group who were going home. The decision was indeed a difficult one to make. Through the intervention of the Commanding Officer, and the help of several other friends, both in the unit and Belgian friends in La Louviere, arrangements were made for a hurried trip to the latter town, where the marriage was duly performed, and a quick return just in time to join the group that was leaving.

The fifty-nine men who were the first to return to the States from the 77th were practically all members of the original unit. They had given many months of hard work to the organization and their withdrawal from the unit took the key men from every service and department of the hospital. They were truly the backbone of the 77th. Not only did their leaving make serious inroads on the functional efficiency of the hospital, but in the group were good friends of every person in the unit. They left early one morning, in the usual two and a half ton trucks, but this time with signs chalked on the sides reading: "102 pointers," "U.S.A. Bound."

With the first group departed for home, the next list was awaited with some impatience. This was some time in arriving. In the meantime the transfers continued. At this period, Chaplain Einer Romer joined the organization to take the place of Chaplain Floyd. Chaplain Romer conducted the Protestant services during the remainder of the lifetime of the 77th.

Rumor finally became fact. On the 19th of June the 77th closed, turning over the remaining prisoner of war patients to a British hospital unit. The move to the new site was accomplished in sections, as vehicles were at a premium and only a few could be obtained at any one time. All of the heavy equipment was moved by train, and the loading of this required several days and considerable work. The orders were that any and all equipment could be moved, as long as it could be placed on the train, and, accordingly, the 77th took everything. This included the bleachers which had been constructed at the ball field, and required the services of a heavy crane borrowed from an engineering unit.

The 77th was instructed to move to an area near Mailly le Camp, France, which was south of Chalons, and near several of the large camps which had been organized for the processing of divisions which were either on their way home or to the Pacific. The 77th was to act in the capacity of a general hospital for three of the camps nearby. The

MEDICINE UNDER CANVAS

site selected was a long field, bordered by a sparse woods of scrub pine, with a second field at right angles to the first. The advance detail, under the direction of Capt. Robert Newman, had marked out the main areas by the time the major part of the personnel and equipment had arrived. As there was no definite time set for the opening of the hospital, the work went forward at a gradual pace. The ground was chalk after going down only a little over a foot, and this slowed the erection of the tents.

As the unofficial word from headquarters had been that the unit would remain in this area until October or November, rather extensive preparations were made to insure the comfort of both the patients and personnel. Because of the scarcity of water, a well was drilled by an engineering unit. The theater was built almost as a permanent structure, with stage and seats, covered by a canvas roof. The individual members of the unit went to great labor to make their tents especially comfortable, and salvaged lumber went to build floors, clothing racks, wash racks and similar luxuries.

The 77th was in its last days as a unit. A group of fifteen high-point officers were ordered home on the Green Plan. A second and then a third group of the enlisted men who had a large number of points were ordered out to ports of embarkation. Replacements with low point scores came into the unit in increasing numbers. In September, the last members of the original 77th were ordered home.

MUNCHEN-GLADBACH PROMOTIONS AND COMMISSIONS

APRIL, 1945:

TO MASTER SERGEANT—John P. Malin.

TO TECHNICIAN 4TH GRADE—Elmer E. Rue, Genedah L. Elliott, Lloyd Hartman, Howard G. Klein, Charles C. Major, Thomas C. Oakes, and Ira M. Williams.

TO TECHNICIAN 5TH GRADE—John A. Sallen.

MAY, 1945:

TO 1ST LT.—Jessie L. Wallace and Nancy J. Sittig.

TO 2ND LT.—George K. Peterson and Victor L. Korsak.

TO 1ST SERGEANT—Arthur F. Zimmers.

TO STAFF SERGEANT—Jason B. Kesselring.

TO TECHNICIAN 4H GRADE—James B. Mease, Gordon W. Gralias, and Daniel C. Koenn.

TO CORPORAL—Fred J. Kelpfel and Joseph H. Mandry.

TO TECHNICIAN 5TH GRADE—Alfred J. Fidel.

JUNE, 1945:

TO CAPT.—Stuart P. Barden.

TO 1ST LT.—Evelyn M. Orth.

TO MASTER SERGEANT—Edward E. Ryan.

TO FIRST SERGEANT—James L. Partin.

TO TECHNICAL SERGEANT—Glenn A. Chaloupka, Herbert M. Fritzsche, Rodney W. Heinen, Phillip M. Maurice and Maurice M. McQuiddy.

TO STAFF SERGEANT—Allton T. Allen, Lamon W. Bethune, Clifford C. Clark, Ed W. Lambert, Edward A. Olwell, and Thurman J. Richardson.

TO TECHNICIAN 3RD GRADE—Robert M. Buchholz, Clarence G. Christian, John M. Dzurny, Charles C. Major, George

J. Meeker, Robert N. Moore, John E. Russ, Frederick L. Schloredt, Ben R. Tanner, Henry Turnbull and Ira M. Williams.

TO SERGEANT—Emory H. Bright, Genadah L. Elliott, R. J. England, William R. Frye, Walter V. Haloski, Thomas J. O'Neil, and Jack D. Woody.

TO TECHNICIAN 4TH GRADE—William I. Alford, Frank H. Anderson, Edward F. Barreuther, Harry W. Benfield, Charles E. Camp, Lawrence A. Cogburn, Franklin T. Dee, Floyd C. Elliott, Paul E. Erb, Lester I. Grossman, John R. Gullledge, George A. Harden, James C. Howard, Martin A. Huff, Jr., George A. Jarvis, Leo J. Jensen, Rollin V. Jerome, Robert W. Kolb, John Kowal, Earl J. Lair, George R. Law, Bernard J. Lettau, Donnie Locklear, Ford H. McParland, Oscar E. Nelson, Edwin C. Parker, John W. Penko, John A. Sallen, William T. Salter, Edward T. Scully, Clarence O. Sindt, Fay Toney, and Rudolph G. Wolff.

TO CORPORAL—George Blaser, Charles Davis, Jr., Carl W. Hensel, John P. Honeycutt, Mallie G. Jenks, Virgil L. Kemp, Walter H. Kraus, Edmund G. Lester, Harry R. Parson, Woodrow W. Rice, Herbert W. Seelen, Rufus H. Shelor, William H. Sherwood, George Spak, Harry D. Woodworth, and James M. Davis.

TO TECHNICIAN 5TH GRADE—James A. Barbee, Baxter P. Barnhardt, Michael E. Cocola, Hubert W. Cranford, Pierre T. Eno, David E. Gibson, James W. Harper, Saul P. Harper, Charles E. Johnson, Russell T. Johnson, Zygmont Kowalski, Raymond P. Laing, Frank N. Meek, Patrick F. Nicoletto, Jack M. Packer, Gaspare G. Panciocco, Sam E. Parrish, Anthony P. Pinto, Linwood V. Pruett, Eugene Shaffernegger, Murvin D. Shearman, Frank J. Smith, Louis Smolik, Ben H. Thomas, Kermit M. Ward, Chun G. Way, Fletcher C. Williamson, Johnnie J. Wooten and Wilton M. Smith.

JOINED THE UNIT

MARCH, 1945:

1st Lt. Stuart P. Barden, M.C., Sgt. Charles B. Fisher, Sgt. Harry C. Waller, T/5 Patt M. Burch, T/5 Charles D. Fish, T/5 Harold I. Shultz, T/5 Ralph Rolseth, and Pvt. Vito J. Sisti.

APRIL, 1945:

Pvt. John C. Belonge, Pvt. Irving Brenner, Pvt. Ralph A. Frederick, Pfc. Michael Berezny, Pvt. Hyman E. Linton, T/5 Vincent Lasalandra, T/5 Joseph Mandry, T/5 Franklyn S. Pitt, Pfc. Forrest L. Wilkeson, T/5 Joseph S. Wurst, Pvt. Carl Wheatley, Pfc. Luther W. Wilkerson, Pfc. Harold E. Strobl.

MAY, 1945:

1st Lt. Rosalie Sofin, A.N.C., Pfc. Marvin Schwartz, Pvt. Frank Cooper, and Pvt. James Rogers.

JUNE, 1945:

Capt. Einer Romer, Chaplain, Prot.

LEFT THE UNIT

MARCH, 1945:

1st Sgt. Alvin E. Kendall.

APRIL, 1945:

2nd Lt. Gladys Rodriguez to the 32nd Gen. Hosp.; T/3 Lilburn H. Lay to the hospital.

MAY, 1945:

2nd Lt. Victor L. Korsak to 180th Gen. Hosp.; 2nd Lt. George K. Peterson to the 425th Med. Bn.; 1st Lt. Clio E. Shirley to the States; 1st Lt. Frances R. Holt to the 12th Field Hospital; T/3 Henry D. Curtiss to the States; Pvt. Sidney McDonald to the 9th Field Hosp.; Pvt. James Roger to the hospital.

JUNE, 1945:

Capt. Ralph A. Arnold to the 231st Gen. Hosp.; 1st Lt. Evelyn M. Orth to the 62nd Field Hosp.; 1st Lt. Marjorie Hart to the

16th Gen. Hosp.; 1st Lt. Anna M. Kniubas to the 78th Field Hosp.; Capt. Jacob Brickman to the 180th Gen. Hosp.; 1st Lt. Rosalie Sofin to the 62nd Field Hosp.; Mary Lou Ransom, A.R.C., to the 118th Evac. Hosp.; Louise E. Seymour, A.R.C., to the 77th Field Hosp.; T/4 James M. Mease to the hospital; Capt. Edgar E. Smith to the States (with 102 points or over); T/3 Robert M. Aberl, T/3 Warren F. Bauer, Cpl. Otha R. Bridges, Pfc. Roy V. Cantrell, T/3 Herbert Chadwick, T/4 Floyd A. Clarkston, Sgt. Lincoln B. Coifee, Pfc. Rupert M. Collins, Sgt. James H. Crowe, T/4 Giovanni D'Amico, T/5 William Davis, T/3 Charles J. Dry, Sgt. Eugene H. Derue, T/4 Merle V. Dickerson, T/3 Lloyd B. Douthit, T/Sgt. Joseph F. Earley, Pfc. Herbert A. Eldridge, T/4 Clifford G. Everson, T/Sgt. Chauncey M. Felt, Pfc. Arndt A. Fiechtner, T/4 Arthur L. Fincannon, T/4 John W. Gabbard, Sgt. William H. Hagan, Sgt. Arthur L. Girty, Sgt. George J. Hitchcock, T/5 Robert M. Hofele, T/4 Earl J. Homan, T/4 Martin L. Hoskins, Pfc. John A. Hostacky, S/Sgt. Virgil D. Jakeway, Pfc. William J. B. King, T/4 Mervin G. Lockwood, T/4 Richard B. Logan, T/5 William J. Magyary, M/Sgt. John P. Malin, Sgt. Frank J. Mascia, T/5 Earl J. Master, Sgt. Virgil L. Mayes, T/3 Kenneth F. McConnell, T/4 John J. McDermott, T/3 Donald McKenny, T/4 Kenneth L. Michael, S/Sgt. Walter E. Moyer, T/5 Harold M. Neis, T/3 George G. Nick, Pfc. Noah H. Deay, Cpl. Joseph L. Skoda, T/4 Lester Smolar, Pfc. John M. Sokup, T/4 Vernon C. Starr, T/Sgt. Melvin G. Streckfuss, Pfc. William E. Thompson, T/4 Charles Vivario, Cpl. Gus W. Wagenlander, Pfc. Adolph Wild, T/5 Harlan H. Woody, Sgt. Donulus F. Young, M/Sgt. Nelson W. Ziesemer, and 1st Sgt. Arthur F. Zimmers.

JUNE 28, 1945:

S/Sgt. Ed Lambert, T/3 Clarence G. Christian, T/3 John M. Dzurny, Sgt. Jack D. Woody, T/4 William I. Alford, T/4 Martin A. Huff, Jr., and Cpl. James H. Fox.

MAILLY LE CAMP PROMOTIONS AND COMMISSIONS

JULY, 1945:

TO 1ST LT. A.N.C.—Anna M. Kniubas and Lisbeth C. Kaufmann.

JOINED THE UNIT

JULY, 1945:

2nd Lt. Walter L. Mason.

LEFT THE UNIT

JULY 8, 1945:

To the States—Lt. Col. Maurice Snyder, Maj. Martin F. Anderson, Maj. Morris S. Harless, Maj. Thomas G. Duckett, Maj. Wendell A. Grosjean, Maj. William F. Kuhn, Maj. Max S. Allen, Maj. Paul R. Harrington, Capt. Homer Head, Capt. John F. McGowan, Capt. James B. Fisher, Capt. Raymond W. Postlethwait, Capt. Robert L. Newman, Capt. James E. McConchie, Capt. Robert W. Forsythe, and Capt. Norman A. Gale.

JULY 12, 1945:

To the States—T/4 Franklin T. Dee, T/4 Floyd G. Elliott, T/4 Gordon Gratiot, T/4 David Grimes, T/4 Lester I. Grossman, T/4 John R. Gullede, T/4 George A. Harden, T/4 Lloyd Hartman, T/4 James C. Howard, T/4 George A. Jarvis, T/4 Rollin V. Jerome, T/4 Daniel C. Koenn, T/4 John Kowal, T/4 Earl J. Lair, T/4 George R. Law, T/4 Donnie Locklear, T/4 Ford H. McParland, T/4 Oscar E. Nelson, T/4 Thomas C. Oakes, T/4 Edwin Parker, T/4 Elmer Rue, T/4 Edward T. Scully, T/4 Clarence O. Sindt, T/4 Kenneth F. Smith, T/4 Rudolph G. Wolff, T/4 Jong F. Yee, Cpl. Eugene Gooch, T/5 Leon P. Johnson, T/5 Russell T. Johnson, T/5 Kenneth Kohlwaies, T/5 Zygmunt Kowalski, T/5 Raymond Laing, T/5 Lawrence Maney, T/5 Joseph B. Martello, T/5 Frank N. Meek, T/5 Jack N. Packer, T/5 Sam E. Parrish, T/5 Stanley Pilch, T/5 Lacy M. Pittman, T/5 Linwood V. Pruett, T/5 Charles Rosen, T/5 William S. Rountree, T/5 Tom Smith, T/5 Elroy Talley, T/5 Harlan Y. Kesterson, T/5 John L. Mize, T/5 Thomas H. Russell,

T/5 James T. Scott, T/5 Elmer L. Seabolt, M/Sgt. Edward E. Ryan, 1st/Sgt. James L. Partin, T/Sgt. Glenn A. Chaloupka, T/Tgt. Herbert Fritzsche, T/Sgt. Philip Maurice, S/Sgt. Lamon Bethune, S/Sgt. Clifford C. Clark, S/Sgt. Jason Kesseling, S/Sgt. Edward A. Olwell, S/Sgt. Thurman J. Richardson, T/3 Robert W. Block, T/3 Robert M. Buchholz, T/3 Charles C. Major, T/3 George J. Meeker, T/3 John E. Russ, T/3 Frederick L. Schloredt, T/3 Ben R. Tanner, T/3 Henry Turnbull, T/3 Ira M. Williams, Sgt. Emory H. Bright, Sgt. Genadah L. Elliott, Sgt. R. J. England, Sgt. William R. Frye, Sgt. Walter V. Haloski, Sgt. Tom J. O'Neil, T/4 Frank H. Anderson, T/4 Harry W. Benfield, T/4 Lawrence A. Cogburn, T/4 Fay Toney, Cpl. Carl W. Hensel, Cpl. John P. Honeycutt, Cpl. Mallie Jenks, Cpl. Virgil L. Kemp, Cpl. Fred L. Klepfel, Cpl. Edmund G. Lester, Cpl. Woodrow W. Rice, Cpl. Herbert W. Seelen, Cpl. George Spak, Cpl. James Barbee, T/5 Robert Dowding, T/5 Baxter Barnhardt, T/5 Leo M. Beck, T/5 Chester N. Brownd, T/5 James A. Burkett, T/5 Eugene Carver, T/5 James L. Cox, T/5 Hubert W. Cranford, T/5 Orville Duncan, T/5 Joseph R. Flanders, T/5 David Gibson, T/5 Saul P. Harper, T/5 Kenneth Hubbard, and T/5 Charles E. Johnson.

Louise Eisenstaedt, A.R.C., to A.R.C. Hdqs., Paris.

JULY 16, 1945:

To the States—T/Sgt. Rodney W. Heinen, T/Sgt. Maurice M. McQuiddy, S/Sgt. Earl O. Modrall, T/3 Robert N. Moore, T/4 Edward Barreuther, T/4 Leo J. Jensen, T/4 Bernard L. Lettau, T/4 John A. Sallen, Cpl. Wilton Smith, T/5 Walter W. Chapell, T/5 Earl E. Coffman, T/5 John V. Nordlund, T/5 Russell O. Peetz, T/5 Murvin D. Shearman, T/5 Frank J. Smith, T/5 Louis E. Smolik, T/5 Ben H. Thomas, T/5 Fletcher C. Williamson, T/5 Johnnie J. Wooten, T/5 Johnnie Woodard, Pfc. John C. Carver, Pfc. James N. Butts, Pfc. Raymond H. Davis, Pfc. Herbert H. Edwards, Pfc. Grady H. Griggs, Pfc. James H. Jenkins, Pfc. John F. Jernigan, Pfc. Ollie F. Jones, Pfc. Arthur D. Lewis, Pfc. Paul Moats, Pfc. Lewis W. Myers, Pfc. John W. Perdew, Pfc. Daniel F. Ray, Pfc. John H. Snyder, Pfc. Michael Trokel, Pfc. Jessie L. Whitely, Pvt. Stanley J. Garmus, and Pvt. Gary W. Kinlaw.

* * * * *

Excerpt from letter from Maj. Hugo B. Paul, Acting Executive Officer, 77th Evacuation Hospital, Mailly le Camp, September, 1945:

“ . . . You wouldn't know anyone here now, as all the old members have gone. The 77th Evac is no more. . . .”

POST LOGUE

Conceived during the days of indecision before December 7, 1941, and activated early in 1942, the 77th Evacuation Hospital was hurried through training, rushed through a staging camp, sped to a port of embarkation, and shipped to England. After barely enough time to consolidate the organization, the 77th went into the North Africa Invasion, functioning first at Oran. Within a matter of hours after landing, the 77th demonstrated the resourcefulness, speed and hard work which were to characterize the unit during the following three years. The ability to recognize a problem for what it was, to throw away the book and improvise, to do a good job regardless of situation or supply—all these were manifest during those first trying days at Oran.

Then came the trek across North Africa, highlighted by the withdrawal in the face of the enemy breakthrough at Kasserine. Days of relatively peaceful rest at Bone were interrupted for the many who took part in the invasion of Sicily. The unit moved on to Sicily, and then back to England. In that gloomy winter, the depression which cul-

minated at Gloucester was finally dispelled at Tunbridge Wells as preparations for another D-day progressed.

Finally came the move on to the Continent. Ste. Mere

Finally came the move to the Continent. Ste. Mere Argonne were the sites of activity for the 77th during the eventful months of July, August, and September, 1944. In Belgium, weeks of work at Verviers terminated after the Battle of the Bulge with the period of needed rest at La Louviere. One final stand at Munchen-Gladbach in Germany and the war in Europe was over. The rapid disbanding at Mailly le Camp followed.

The 77th was a small unit compared to the millions in the allied forces; the work of the hospital was minute compared to the total task. But the thousands of patients who received medical care and found comfort under the canvas of the 77th perhaps justified its existence. Reflecting on this knowledge should bring some small glow of satisfaction to each member of the unit and perhaps help to erase the memories of the personal discomforts experienced at times. Such discomforts were always minimal when compared to the hardships and sacrifices of the valiant men of the combat troops.



MEDICINE UNDER CANVAS

HEADQUARTERS
ADVANCE SECTION COM Z

CHB/LD/rce
30 April 1945

200.6

SUBJECT: Recommendation for Award of the Meritorious Service Unit Plaque.

THRU: Commanding General, Advance Section, Communications Zone, APO 113, U. S. Army.

TO: Commanding General, Communications Zone, European T of Opns, APO 887, U. S. Army.

1. a. It is recommended that the 77th Evacuation Hospital be awarded the Meritorious Service Unit Plaque. The 77th Evacuation Hospital is presently assigned to Advance Section, Communications Zone.

4. Proposed Citation:

The 77th Evacuation Hospital has rendered outstanding meritorious service in connection with military operations during the period of 30 March 1944 to date. Through its outstanding devotion to duty the unit has rendered valuable service during all phases of military operations. The consistent high standards of efficiency, military discipline and Esprit de Corps, exemplified the highest type of leadership and teamwork in the performance of duty, and is in keeping with the highest traditions of the United States Army.

C. H. BEASLEY
Colonel, Medical Corps
Surgeon

4 Incls:

- 1 - Letter from Commanding General, Advance Section, Communication Zone.
- 2 - Letter from Chief Surgeon, European Theater of Operations.
- 3 - Letter from the Chief of Hospitalization Division, European Theater of Operations.
- 4 - Copy of newspaper article.

200.6-77 Evac Hosp 1st Ind
HQ, ADVANCE SEC COM Z, APO 113, U.S. ARMY,

TO: Commanding General, Communications Zone, European Theater of Operations, APO 887, U.S. Army.

1. This recommendation has been reviewed by a Board of Officers, appointed by me for that purpose, which recommends that it be approved.

2. After careful consideration of the papers, I personally approve this recommendation.

A.G. VINEY
Colonel, GSC
Commanding

AG 299.6 MPD:GA 2nd Ind
Hq, Theater Service Forces, European T. (Rear) APO 887,
20 August 1945.

TO: CG, Ois Intermediate Section.

1. Not favorably considered.
2. VD rate set forth in basic communication is considered excessive for this unit.

BY COMMAND OF LIEUTENANT GENERAL LEE:

H. H. NEWMAN
Colonel, A. G. D.
Acting Adjutant General

4 Incls: n/c

NOTE: The VD (venereal disease) rate in the 77th was always zero or near zero. The group of litter bearers attached to the 77th at Verviers, however, had a rather high rate which was included in the reports of the 77th at that time. Apparently this fact resulted in disapproval of the recommendation by Gen. Lee.

—Ed.

General Orders)
No. 30)

DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
Washington 25, D.C., 22 April 1948

EXTRACT

* * * * *

VI—MERITORIOUS UNIT COMMENDATION.—By direction of the Secretary of the Army, under the provisions of paragraph 14, AR 260-15, the Meritorious Unit Commendation is awarded to the following unit of the Army of the United States for exceptionally meritorious conduct in the performance of outstanding services during the period indicated. The citation reads as follows:

The 77th Evacuation Hospital is commended for exceptionally meritorious conduct in performance of outstanding services in the European Theater from 29 March 1944 to 30 April 1945. This unit rendered medical care of exceptional quality to the sick and wounded during the Normandy, Northern France, Rhineland, Ardennes offensive, and Central Europe campaigns. Personnel of this hospital worked long and untiringly to care for and treat an unusually large number of patients during its operations in Europe. The consistent high standard of efficiency, military discipline, and esprit de corps exemplified a superior degree of leadership and teamwork in the performance of duty and reflect great credit on the 77th Evacuation Hospital, the Medical Department, and the Army of the United States.

* * * * *

BY ORDER OF THE SECRETARY OF THE ARMY:

OMAR N. BRADLEY

Chief of Staff, United States Army

Official:

EDWARD F. WITSELL

Major General
The Adjutant General

MEDICINE UNDER CANVAS



HERE AND THERE

MEDICINE UNDER CANVAS



NURSES



WHO'S WHO?

MEDICINE UNDER CANVAS



ALL THE CONVENIENCES OF HOME

MEDICINE UNDER CANVAS



MEDICAL WARDS



SURGERY



SUPPLY



PATIENTS' MESS



HEADQUARTERS



LABORATORY



MEDICAL WARDS



MEDICAL WARD GROUPS—OFFICERS, NURSES AND ENLISTED MEN

MEDICINE UNDER CANVAS



MEDICAL HEADQUARTERS (IN TENTS)



OFFICERS' MESS
PERSONNEL



PHARMACY



MEDICAL HEADQUARTERS (IN BUILDINGS)



ENLISTED MEN'S MESS PERSONNEL



PATIENTS' MESS PERSONNEL



MEDICAL WARD MEN



MEDICAL WARD OFFICERS



PHARMACY



SURGERY AND CENTRAL SUPPLY PERSONNEL



ON DUTY



"AT EASE"

MEDICINE UNDER CANVAS



Top Row: ABERL, ROBERT W.; ALFORD, WILLIAM I.; ALLEN, ALLTON; ALLEN, MAX; ANDERSON, FRANK; ANDERSON, MARTIN.
 2nd Row: ARNOLD, RALPH; BARDEN, STUART; BARNHARDT, BAXTER; BARREUTHER, EDWARD; BARTLETT, WAYNE; BAUER, WARREN.
 3rd Row: BECK, LEO; BENFIELD, HARRY; BENNETT, PAUL; BESSER, ISADOR; BETHUNE, LAMON; BLASER, GEORGE.
 4th Row: BLOCK, ROBERT; BORTZ, MARY; BOWERS, MARVIN L.; BOWSER, JOHN; BRADLEY, JACK; BRENNER, IRVING.
 5th Row: BRICKMAN, JACOB; BRIGHT, EMORY; BROWN, EARL; BROWND, CHESTER; BURDINE, IRA; BURKETT, JAMES.
 6th Row: BUTTS, JAMES; BEREZNY, MICHEAL; CANTRELL, ROY; CARVER, EUGENE; CARVER, JOHN; CHADWICK, HERBERT.
 7th Row: CHAPPELL, WALTER; CHRISTIAN, CLARENCE; CLARK, CLIFFORD; CLARKSTON, FLOYD; CLASON, JOHN; COFFEE, LINCOLN.

MEDICINE UNDER CANVAS



Top Row: COFFMAN, EARL; COGBURN, LAWRENCY; COKER, JESSIE; COLLINS, RUPERT; COX, JAMES; COX, REID.
 2nd Row: CROSS, DEAN; CROSS, MARION; CROWE, JAMES; CRANFORD, HUBERT; CSARNY, THOMAS; CURPHEY, ESTHER.
 3rd Row: D'AMICO, GIOVANNI; DAVIS, JAMES; DAVIS, CHARLES; DAVIS, RAYMOND; DARK, LETHA; DEE, FRANKLIN.
 4th Row: DEMAR, PHILIP; DENARO, FRANK; DERUE, EUGENE; DICKERSON, MERLE; DOUTHIT, LLOYD; DOWDING, ROBERT.
 5th Row: DOWNS, DOROTHY; DRUCE, SIDNEY; DRY, CHARLES; DUCKETT, THOMAS; DUNCAN, ORVILLE; DZURNY, JOHN.
 6th Row: EARLEY, JOSEPH; EDWARDS, HERBERT; EISENSTAEDT, LOUISE; ELDRIDGE, HERBERT; ELLIOTT, FLOYD; ELLIOTT, GENADAH.
 7th Row: ELLIOTT, MARY; ENO, PIERRE; ERB, PAUL; ESSON, CLIFFORD; EVERSON, CLIFFORD; EWING, MARY.

MEDICINE UNDER CANVAS



Top Row: FELT, CHAUNCEY; FIDEL, ALFRED; FIECHTNER, ARNDT; FINCANNON, ARTHUR; FISH, CHARLES; FISHER, JAMES.
 2nd Row: FITZGERALD, GLADYS; FLANDERS, JOSEPH; FORSYTHE, ROBERT; FOSTER, JOHN; FRANKLIN, GLENN; FREDERICKS, ELLSWORTH.
 3rd Row: FRITZSCHE, HERBERT; FRYE, WILLIAM; GABBARD, JOHN; GALE, NORMAN; GARRUTO, HENRY; GIBSON, DAVID.
 4th Row: GILLETTE, DOROTHY; GILLILAND, LOUISE; GIRTY, ARTHUR; GOGEL, MARY; GOOCH, EUGENE; GOODALE, DOROTHY.
 5th Row: GRATIAS, GORDON; GRECO, JOHN; GREENSPUN, DAVID; GRIMES, DAVID; GROSJEAN, WENDELL; HAGAN, WILLIAM.
 6th Row: HAGINS, ELIZABETH; HALL, VIRGINIA; HALOSKI, WALTER; HANSON, FLORENCE; HARDEN, GEORGE; HARLESS, MORRIS.
 7th Row: HARPER, JAMES; HARPER, SAUL; HARRINGTON, PAUL; HART, MAJORIE; HARTMAN, LLOYD; HEAD, HOMER.

MEDICINE UNDER CANVAS



Top Row: HEINE, MARIE; HEINEN, RODNEY; HENSEL, CARL; HITCHCOCK, GEORGE; HOCH, LILLIAN; HOFELE, ROBERT.
 2nd Row: HOMAN, EARL; HOSKINS, MARTIN; HOLT, FRANCES; HONEYCUTT, JOHN; HOSTACKY, JOHN; HOWARD, JAMES.
 3rd Row: HUFF, MARTIN; INGILS, CHESTER; JACKSON, ELLIS; JAKEWAY, VIRGIL; JENKS, MALLIE; JENSEN, LEO.
 4th Row: JERNIGAN, JOHN; JEROME, ROLLIN; JOHNSON, LEON; JOHNSON, RUSSELL; JONES, OLLIE; KATZEN, RAYMOND.
 5th Row: KAUFMANN, LISBETH; KEMP, VIRGIL; KEMPSTER, MARY; KEOUGH, THELMA; KESSELRING, JASON; KING, WILLIAM.
 6th Row: KLEIN, HOWARD; KLEPFEL, FRED; KNIUBAS, ANNA; KOCSIS, JOHN; KOHLWAIES, KENNETH; KOLB, ROBERT.
 7th Row: KOENN, DANIEL; KOWAL, JOHN; KORSAK, VICTOR; KRAUS, WALTER; KUHN, WILLIAM; LAING, RAYMOND.

MEDICINE UNDER CANVAS



Top Row: LAIR, EARL; LAKE, FRANCES; LAMBERT, ED; LAW, GEORGE; LEACH, SARAH; LENTZ, ODELE.
 2nd Row: LETTAU, BERNARD; LEWIS, ARTHUR; LIPSCHULTZ, DAVID; LOCKLEAR, DONNIE; LOCKWOOD, MERVIN; LOGAN, RICHARD.
 3rd Row: MACE, ERMA; MAGYARY, WILLIAM; MAJOR, CHARLES; MANDRY, JOSEPH; MANEY, LAWRENCE; MANSELL, TIMOTHY.
 4th Row: MARTELLO, JOSEPH; MARZOA, EDWARD; MASCIA, FRANK; MASON, WALTER; MASTEN, EARL; MAURICE, PHILLIP.
 5th Row: MAYES, VIRGIL; McCONCHIE, JAMES; McCONNELL, KENNETH; McDERMOTT, JOHN; McEVoy, JAMES; McGROGAN, ELIZABETH.
 6th Row: McINTOSH, HELEN; McKENNY, DONALD; McFARLAND, FORD; McQUIDDY, MAURICE; MEASE, JAMES; MEEK, FRANK.
 7th Row: MEEKER, GEORGE; MENEES, ROBERT; MICHAEL, KENNETH; MILLMAN, LOUIS; MOATS, PAUL; MODRALL, EARL.

MEDICINE UNDER CANVAS



Top Row: MOORE, ROBERT; MOYER, WALTER; MYERS, LEWIS; NAHRENDORF, HERMINA; NEIS, HAROLD; NELSON, OSCAR.
 2nd Row: NEWMAN, ROBERT; NICK, GEORGE; NICOLELLO, PATRICK; NORDLUND, JOHN; NOVICKI, FREDRICK; O'DONNELL, JOHN.
 3rd Row: OLSZEWSKI, WALTER; OLWELL, EDWARD; O'NEIL, THOMAS; ORLETSKY, WALTER; SYDENSTRICKER, DOROTHY; ORTH, EVELYN.
 4th Row: PAIK, MARIE; PALMER, CLARENCE E.; PARKER, EDWIN; PARRISH, SAM; PARSONS, HARRY; PEETZ, RUSSELL.
 5th Row: PANCIOCCO, GASPARE; PENNINGTON, GEORGE; PENKO, JOHN; PERDEW, JOHN; PERDUE, GLADYS; PETERSON, ELVIRA.
 6th Row: PILCH, STANLEY; PINTO, ANTHONY; PITT, FRANKLYN; PITTMAN, LACY; POSTLETHWAIT, RAYMOND; PRUETT, LINWOOD.
 7th Row: RABE, MELVIN; RAMSAY, MAE; RANNEY, GORDON; RANSOM, MARY; REESE, EVA; RICE, WOODROW.

MEDICINE UNDER CANVAS



Top Row: RICHARDSON, THURMAN; ROBERTSON, DILLARD; RODRIQUEZ, GLADYS; ROHR, IRENE; ROLSETH, RALPH; ROMER, EINER.
 2nd Row: ROSEN, CHARLES; RUE, ELMER; RUMOLD, MERVIN; RUSS, JOHN; RYAN, EDWARD; SALLIN, JOHN.
 3rd Row: SALTER, WILLIAM; SCHAFFERNEGGER, EUGENE; SCHLOREDT, FREDERICK; SCHMIDT, JOSEPH; SCHMIDT, MELVIN; SCHULER, ELAINE.
 4th Row: SCOTT, JAMES; SCULLY, EDWARD; SEABOLT, ELMER; SEAY, NOAH; SELEN, HERBERT; SEYMOUR, JANE.
 5th Row: SHEARMAN, MURVIN; SHELLITO, JOHN; SHELOR, RUFUS; SHERWOOD, WILLIAM; SHIRLEY, CLIO; SINDT, CLARENCE.
 6th Row: SIPPLE, ESTHER; SISTI, VITO; SITTIG, NANCY; SMITH, EDGAR; SMITH, FRANK; SMITH, KENNETH.
 7th Row: SMITH, TOM; SMITH, WILTON; SMOLAR, LESTER; SMOLIK, LOUIS; SNYDER, EDITH; SNYDER, JOHN.

MEDICINE UNDER CANVAS



Top Row: SNYDER, MAURICE; SOKUP, JOHN; SPAK, GEORGE; STARR, VERNON; STEINER, DORIS; STELL, ERNEST.
 2nd Row: ST. JOHN, MARGARET; STOTTER, ROLAND; STRECKFUSS, MELVIN; TACKETT, PAUL; TALLEY, ELROY; TANNER, BEN.
 3rd Row: THOMAS, BEN; THOMPSON, HOYT; TONEY, FAY; TUCKER, JOHN; TURNBULL, HENRY; VICARIO, CHARLES.
 4th Row: VOORHEES, GORDON; WALKER, BESSIE; WALKER, DEAN; WALLACE, JESSIE; WARD, KERMIT; WATTERSON, JOHN.
 5th Row: WAY, CHUN; WEAVER, JAMES; WEISBENDER, IRENE; WHERLEY, ENID; WILD, ADOLPH; WILKESON, FORREST.
 6th Row: WILKERSON, LUTHER; WILLIAMSON, FLETCHER; WILLIAMS, IRA; WOODARD, JOHN; WOODWORTH, HARRY; WOODY HARLAN.
 7th Row: WOODY, JACK; WOOTEN, JOHNNIE; WURST, JOSEPH; YEE, JONG; YOUNG, DONULUS; ZEMAN, JOSEPHINE.

MEDICINE UNDER CANVAS



Top Row: ZIESEMER, NELSON; ZIMMERS, ARTHUR; ZIROFF, MARY; GREENE, FRANK; SMITH, HELEN.
 2nd Row: TURNER, IVY J.; SMITH, DORCAS; MARTIN, HAROLD; KIRK, LANNIE; WALSH, WILLIAM.



Top Row: HANNEKE, ARTHUR; GERLACH, ROBERT; DUBEAU, EUGENE; McCLAMROCK, ROY; WILLIAMS, LESLIE; STEFFENS, ALBERT.
 2nd Row: BRIGHT, THEODORE; LALICH, JOSEPH; GEVOCK, GERALD; SHAW, GEORGE; GIBBS, KEITH; COCOSA, MICHAEL.
 3rd Row: JAMES, RALPH; GOULD, NATALIE; NEUMANN, MARGARET; ABERNETHY, RUTH; CROSS, ROBERTA; DELP, MAHLON.

MEDICINE UNDER CANVAS



Top Row: BURNET, BURGH; HAMILTON, TOM; PARTIN, JAMES; KAMMERER, JOHN; JONES, BROADWAY; ABRIGO, TILDEN.
 2nd Row: LATHROP, VERNER; BAILEY, HELEN; HAYES, JOSEPH; SHAFFER, EDWIN; CRAWFORD, WAYLAND; CLUTE, HOWARD.
 3rd Row: KENDALL, ALVIN; HUDSON, LESLIE R.; CRITCHFIELD, LENORE M.; SWIFT, KATE L.; NICKSCH, DONALD W.; DAVIS, FREEMAN.
 4th Row: HOOVER, HARRY M.; WIGGINS, BEVERLY R.; KUNZE, WILLIAM F.; MCGOWAN, JOHN F.; CHALOUPKA, GLENN A.; JARVIS, GEORGE A.
 5th Row: HASHINGER, EDWARD H.; OAKES, THOMAS C.; COOKE, S. L.; JONES, CARL; PACKER, JACK M.; MAYE, JAMES.
 6th Row: HOARD, EARL L.; STERNBERGH, MARY G.; DILLON, TONY G.; WEST, GRACE G.

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GORDON RANNEY

DIED JULY 14, 1945

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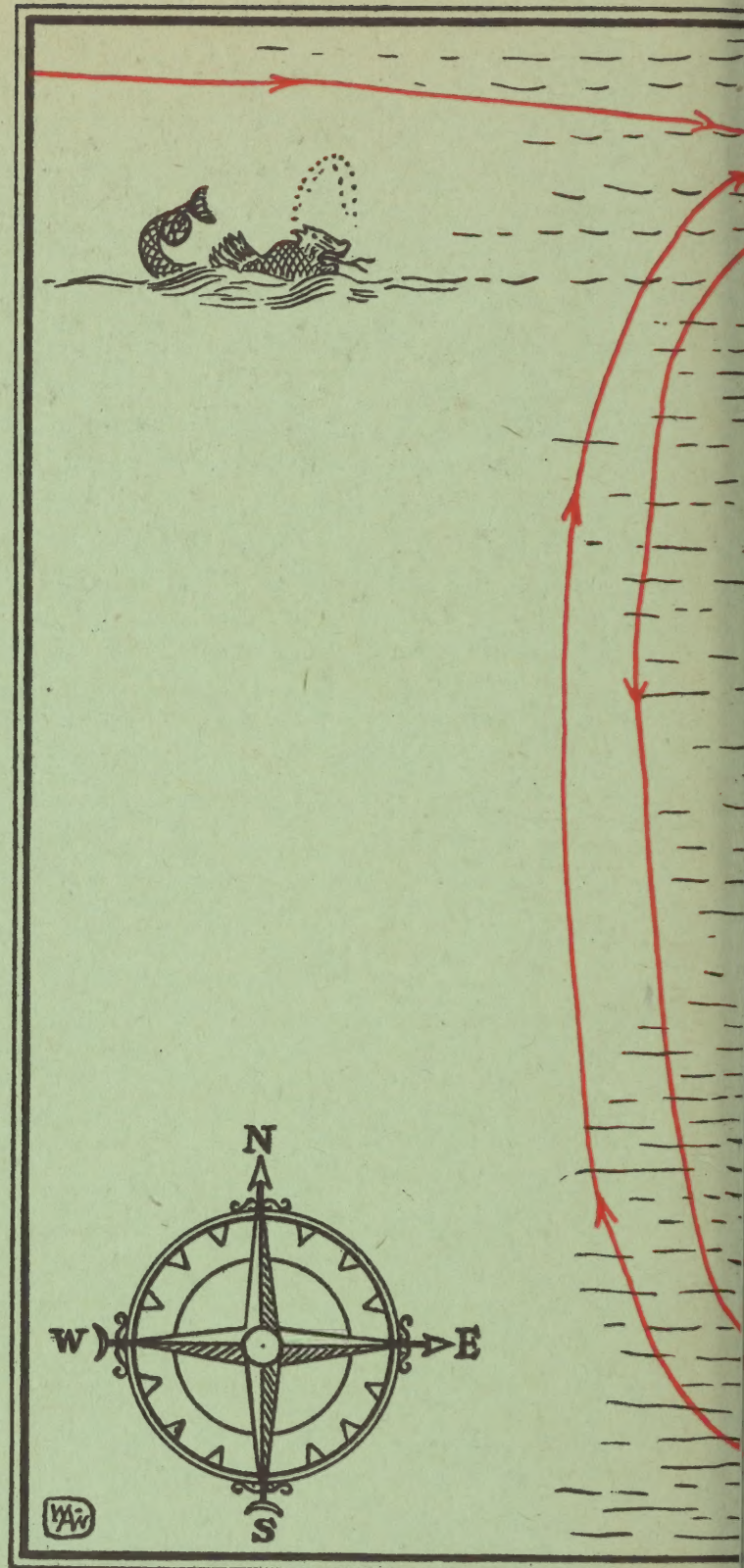
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1 AUG. 42	INDIAN
5 AUG. 42	TOWN GAP
5 AUG. 42	H.M.T.
17 AUG. 42	"ORCADES"
18 AUG. 42	TIDWORTH
7 SEPT. 42	CAMP OFF. & E.M.
	SALISBURY - NUR.
7 SEPT. 42	FRENCHAY
30 OCT. 42	PARK
30 OCT. 42	U.S.A.T. "BRAZIL"
11 NOV. 42	U.S.A.T. "URAGUAY"
12 NOV. 42	BAUDEN'S HOSPITAL
1 DEC. 42	ORAN
	L'HOPITAL CIVILE
1 DEC. 42	"MUD FLATS"
15 JAN. 43	ORAN
17 JAN. 43	CONSTANTINE
20 JAN. 43	TEBESSA I
18 FEB. 43	
19 FEB. 43	LA MESKIANA
27 MAR. 43	
28 MAR. 43	TEBESSA II
14 APR. 43	
15 APR. 43	BONE
2 SEPT. 43	
2 SEPT. 43	H.M.H.S.
5 SEPT. 43	"AMARAPOORA"
6 SEPT. 43	PALERMO with
25 SEPT. 43	59th EVAC.
26 SEPT. 43	
28 OCT. 43	LICATA

28 OCT. 43	MONDELLO
10 NOV. 43	BEACH
11 NOV. 43	U.S.A.T.
25 NOV. 43	"JOHN ERICSSON"
26 NOV. 43	
24 JAN. 44	EVERLEIGH
25 JAN. 44	
1 APR. 44	GLOUCESTER
1 APR. 44	
28 JUNE 44	TUNBRIDGE
	WELLS
28 JUNE 44	
5 JULY 44	SOUTHAMPTON
6 JULY 44	
	H.M.T.
	"EMPIRE LANCE"
7 JULY 44	ST. MERE
16 JULY 44	EGLISE I
16 JULY 44	
9 AUG. 44	ST. MERE
	EGLISE II
9 AUG. 44	
16 AUG. 44	ST. LO
17 AUG. 44	
23 AUG. 44	LE MANS
24 AUG. 44	
4 SEPT. 44	CHARTRES
6 SEPT. 44	
6 OCT. 44	CLERMONT-
	SUR-ARGONNE
8 OCT. 44	
4 JAN. 45	VERVIERS
4 JAN. 45	
22 MAR. 45	LA
	LOUVIERE
23 MAR. 45	
26 JUNE	MUNCHEN
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